

## 04.21.21 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

**Title:** “Being A Balcony Barnabas”

**Scripture Reading:** [Proverbs 12:25, 25:11 & I Thess. 4:18-5:11](#)

**Reflection:** Rev. George Vink

Did you hear them last Sunday? Did you read the words in Pastor Doug’s notes: *“We need balcony people because the world is full of basement people!”* Not inclined to shout **“Amen! Say it again,”** I nudged Shirley instead. I’ll leave the **“Amens”** to a different George. But, as someone who too often feels like a *“basement person,”* I realize the wonderful ways we are touched by *“Balcony People.”* And, during our pandemic period, the need for those has increased greatly.

It’s important for our well-being to recall the folks who touched us in meaningful ways. Those people who encouraged us with a fitting word, a kind or helpful suggestion. Remembering them, we continue by asking ourselves, *“To whom have I been an encourager?”* Both challenging endeavors!

[John 13](#) describes Jesus and the disciples celebrating the Passover and Jesus instructing his disciples to do it again, *“In remembrance of me!”* In addition, Jesus commands his followers to *“Love one another!”* One way of loving is by encouraging one another, being a Balcony Barnabas. We’re called to be such as followers who’ve experienced the grace of God and are becoming better at being Christ-like, offering our *“bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God....”* (Romans 12:1)

Later in [Romans 12](#), we see encouraging among the gifts of grace, listed between teaching, and giving generously. Seems right. When parents, having taught by way of words or example, see their children walking in obedience, they’re encouraged. When a church is generously supported by the membership, its leaders are also encouraged. When we work together to accomplish mutual goals and experience progress, we’re encouraged. And, hopefully, those encouraged become encouragers!

Teacher Paul wrote a needed letter to the Thessalonians as they faced struggles and an uncertain future. Hey! That’s us! This pandemic period is lasting laboriously long! And, like them, we also await the Lord’s Return, even if not quite as impatiently. Yet, even so, we too must work together and make sure we’re *“encouraging or building up one another”* as Paul commended them for doing so. All this is nothing new, and still as necessary!

People have always needed encouragement. Fleeing Saul’s wrath, David did. Jonathan did so by coming along side, just by being there. Jonathan was a *“Balcony Barnabas!”* In Acts, we learn that John Mark experienced Barnabas’ support and encouragement. If we take time as urged previously, we’ll have examples from our own lives. Recall...Who was the person listening when the others were giving advice? Who helped clean up while the others said, *“Thank you,”* as they walked away? Who.....

Another good to know! The word used for encouragement is closely related to the work of the Holy Spirit. It’s about coming alongside, ([parakaleo](#)) being present, being there for one another. It’s a matter of showing up where and when we’re needed. Our words may not be remembered, but our being there will not be forgotten.

Who needs this encouragement? That’s easily answered! We all do! Denying any need reveals a sad, if not hurting sense of self. A beaten, bleeding Jesus needed it, and asked for it from his disciples as he faced death. The weary mother with cracks in her marriage needs it. The widower who’s ever so lonely needs it. The

members not at worship for so long need to know they're missed. It's the faithful elder who follows up on their promises. It's the musician, the greeter, and your pastors. It's....

The how of doing so again calls for reflection. *"How were you or what encouraged you?"* When you faced that new challenge, how were you helped? Sometimes it was words, and sometimes a wordless hug did it. A sincere compliment seldom fails. A much-needed check serves well. Have God's Spirit guide your doing so. Don't resist. You really have no choice, do you? Being a Balcony Barnabas enriches your life and makes you more Christ-like.

**Prayer:**

Dear Lord, our Great Encourager, Thank You for every Balcony Barnabas in my life who made a difference. Help me to one in someone else's. Please show me how, Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Action Item for the Day/Week:**

Do not let 24 hours pass without having done **2 ways** of encouraging someone. Not one, but two! And take the time to thank/contact someone who encouraged you! It's not too late!

**Songs for today:**

[10,000 Reasons](#)

[Bind Us Together](#)