

# The Encouraging Lord

Acts 18:9-11

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**One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.**

# Our Lord is an Encourager

- **“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17).**
- **“Jesus came in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14)**
- **“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body” (2 Cor. 4:7-10).**

# 1. “Do not be afraid”

- Only 1/3 of young adults (18-35) feel that someone cares about them.
- 40% of young adults said that they anxious about decisions, uncertain about the future, and afraid of failing.
- “When I am afraid, I will trust in You” (Psalm 56:3)
- “There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. The one who fears has not been perfected in love” (1 John 4:18).

## **2. “For I am with you”**

- The pagan world of the New Testament believed that the gods were uncaring and distant.**
- The Christian faith proclaims that God is near and cares about you.**
- Loneliness is the modern epidemic**
- Loneliness robs us of hope for the future, and personal significance**

# The Negative Influence of Loneliness

- A study on teenagers in Israel found: “As predicted, lonely adolescents scored lower than socially embedded adolescents on future orientation variables applied to the relational and near future domains and lonely boys scored lower than lonely girls.”
- Spiritual loneliness is living life without the fellowship of God.
- Spiritual loneliness results in discouragement about the future.

# The Power of Worship

- **The Barna Group said: “Overall, churching adults say they leave worship services feeling inspired (37%), encouraged (37%), forgiven (34%), as though they have connected with God or experienced his presence (33%) and challenged to change something in their life (26%), every time. A plurality of churching adults also express always feeling like attending service was the most important experience they had all week (29%) and that they learned something new (28%).”**

### **3. “I have many people in this city”**

- Corinth: “It was noted for its wealth, and for the luxurious and immoral and vicious habits of the people” (Easton’s Bible Dictionary).**
- Immorality: “Lasciviousness, particularly, was not only tolerated, but consecrated here, by the worship of Venus, and the notorious prostitution of numerous attendants devoted to her” (ATS Bible Dictionary)**



### **3. “I have many people in this city”**

- “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).**

### **3. “I have many people in this city”**

- “Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: ‘The Lord knows those who are his,’ and, ‘Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.’” (2 Tim. 2:19).**
- Are you here to be entertained?**
- Are you here to join us in worship and service?**
- Are you here to follow Christ together with us?**

# **God is at work in this world. Remember...**

- In a very ungodly city God can create a godly church**
- In a very fearful city God can create a confident church**
- In a very lonely city God can create a loving church**