Refreshing and Renewal

Topical

Objective: Teach how to find spiritual renewal and encouragement!

Reading: 1 Corinthians 16:13-18

Memory: 1 Corinthians 16:13-14, “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love.”

Introduction:

1. The passage encourages us to be spiritually faithful, courageous and strong and to do everything out of love. What if I don’t feel that way? Where does one find that kind of initiative and spiritual life?

2. Someone says, “I see people living with that spiritual life. I would like to have it, I have obeyed the Gospel, but have never really felt that sort of renewal, that sort of spiritual determination. It’s not me. I am empty that way. Can that spiritual life be for me?” YES.

3. Someone else says; “I used to feel that spiritual courage and life, but I’ve lost it. How do I get it back again? I just feel spiritually dead, spiritually stale. Can I get spiritual zeal back? Can it be renewed?”

4. Is there anything we can or should be doing on our part to find such spiritual strength and courage? If we would have life that is life indeed, is there anything we can do on our part to enable such enlivening, such refreshing and renewal? The answer is YES.

We ought know how to find spiritual refreshing and renewal. (HOW?)

There are times when Christians get discouraged. Spiritually depressed. We ought to know where such spiritual refreshing and renewal comes from. There are things we can do to renew our spiritual enthusiasm.

If you are feeling out of touch with a friend, what do you do? You call them! If you are feeling distant and out of touch with God, the first thing that ought to come to mind is.

I. Communicating with God.

A. Be listening to God.
   1. Take some quiet time.
      a. Sometimes what may be going on is “Elijah Syndrome”. I was worn out and felt destitute.
      b. We get too busy; even in doing good things. Sometimes we need to just stop. Stop and rest. Stop and listen. Listen with our ears to the workings of God’s handiworks. Stand in awe of His creation. Behold the gentle breeze, the birds singing, the exquisite beauty of tiny flowers that you might not even notice.
      c. Stop trying to do everything and just think about Him. Psalm 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God”.
      d. Listen with your heart to the still quiet voice of God in your soul.
   2. Spend time with His Word.
      a. Reading Scriptures.
      c. The Word of God brings life. It brings encouragement. Don’t you always feel uplifted and better when you get “Good News”!!??

B. Be talking to God.
   1. Now we are talking about spending time prayer. I always feel better after I pray.
   2. No wonder you feel disconnected if you haven’t taken time to talk for a while. Works with God too.
   3. Encouragement, refreshing, renewal life and revitalization – comes from God. So ask Him! You can do nothing without Him, so you need to ASK for renewal and refreshing.
   4. Whatever is bothering or depressing you, turn it over to God.
      a. Of course He already knows, but it revitalizes you to get it said. To hear it yourself that He has it under control.
      b. When I verbalize things that are puzzling me, sometimes the answer just jumps right out!
      c. When I open my heart up and pour it out to God I feel better. It helps to talk about it.
      d. Let Him know! (He does anyhow) Your guilt, fears, qualms, struggles. That your feeling stale.
   5. Maybe you can’t find the discipline to do it yourself. Have you ever tried praying with others? If you are feeling “stale”, get with someone or several someones and pray together, at length!
C. Try singing.
   1. Singing touches the heart! What is better for uplifting your heart and soul than song? That’s why there are “pep” rallies and military marches, because they stir us up inside. What better way to stir up enthusiasm to live for God than to sing praises to Him?
   2. Singing praises to God is like that. How can you sing (or listen to) “Our God, He is Alive” or “Oh Lord, Our Lord” without getting excited?
   3. Singing can be contagious. Like watching somebody laugh – eventually makes you laugh too.

We spoke about getting with others to pray. Fellowshipping with others for prayer is important to our life revitalization, but there is more to Christian fellowship even than prayer. If you are feeling “dead” of stale, that is particularly the time you should be

II. Seeking spiritual renewal through Christian fellowship.
A. Revitalization comes from association with Christians!
   1. Christ lives and abides in Christians.
      a. There is renewal and strength in Christian association! They are the fullness of Him who fills all in all. They are the body of Christ on earth.
      b. If Christ lives in them, then, here is fellowship with Christ! If Christ is here, then here is inspiration. Here is role modeling. Here is strength, here is sharing, here is re-connection.
      c. Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” Do you know that Christ is right there in your midst? Here is association with God!
      d. If your are feeling abandoned by God, come to where He is! In Christian assembly!
   2. God told us to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together Hebrews 10:23-25, “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
      a. God knew what He was doing. He told Christians this for a reason.
      b. So we can hold onto our hope. So we can overcome spiritual discouragement.
      c. So we can “spur one another on! Are you in need of “spurring” of encouragement? Where are you supposed to be? Even if you don’t feel like it!!!
   3. Two or three or more can support one another; Ecclesiastes 4:12, “Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” To stand against trials and tribulations and temptations. Strong against desolation, loneliness. Able to find and re-discover your purpose in Christ.

B. Christians receive encouragement from Christians.
   1. Philemon 1:7, “Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.”
   2. Philemon 1:20, “I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.”
   3. The Apostle says in Romans 1:11-12, “I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong-- that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.” Here is a “spiritual” gift from God! One you can give and receive anytime.
   4. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”
      a. Here is a job for you – (you know you feel better when you know what you are supposed to be doing) - to think of a Christian who is struggling with something and to encourage them.
      b. Are they discouraged because they are sick? Out of work? Needing a ride? Are they struggling with temptations?
      c. You get stronger by helping them. You are being the body of Christ when you reach out to them. Here is when the Spirit of Christ is living in you.
      d. Here is where you experience what life IS, What it IS to be like Christ, and that revitalizes YOU!
Physically speaking, when you get the blues, it helps to force yourself to get up and do something. When you get cabin fever, get up and go out for a walk. The house is messy and you are discouraged, try cleaning off a spot on the counter or sweeping a floor. It helps. The principle is that when you are feeling down, get up and do something. The same is true spiritually.

III. Renewal comes from active involvement.
A. Find strength by doing good deeds.
1. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, “May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.” Hearts are strengthened and people are encouraged by doing good deeds!
2. It IS more blessed to give than it is to receive. Folks generally feel better about giving a gift than they do about receiving one. It does something for their self-worth. It does something for their soul! LOVE gives more than it takes.
3. Godly deeds can put you standing with God rather than standing alone.
4. But I am stale and weak and don’t feel like doing it - sometimes you do need to ACT yourself into a better way of FEELING. Concept fits with the fruit of the Spirit that includes “self - control” or “discipline”.
5. Can you remember a time when you were spiritually uplifted? What was it? Helping someone? Fasting and prayer? A men’s or women’s prayer breakfast? Find the discipline to put yourself in that or similar situation again!

B. Find strength by speaking good words.
1. Discouraging words discourage yourself. Words that bite and devour destroy the speaker as well.
2. Good words generate from a good spirit.
3. Give a compliment and feel better. Build someone up and feel like a builder. Give words of life and feel alive. Share something from the Good Book with someone and feel better yourself.

One more. Physically we always feel better when we get “cleaned up”. Spiritually this is called

IV. Repentance.
A. Is something hindering, separating?
1. Are your hedging on something? If you are being unfaithful to the source of life no wonder you feel dead. If you are participating in something evil, if you are guilty of something, you are supposed to feel unclean. If you have been shirking your responsibilities before God, no wonder you feel distanced.
2. There is a joy, and uplifting in knowing the relationship is good.
3. Have you ever fought with someone and been separated by the strife? Have you been reconciled and felt the relief and joy and comfort of a relationship restored. It is the feeling of "I'm okay now!"

B. Get right.
1. Psalm 139:23-24, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” In other words; take a courageous moral inventory and confess, acknowledge and fix it.
2. Be clean. Be renewed. Like getting out of the shower, feeling refreshed, only this is spiritual!
3. God is making everything new. God is making everything fresh and clean – if you let Him.
4. Acts 3:19, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,” Here is where refreshing and renewal and spiritual “feel right” comes from.

So What?
Tough times will come. Discouragement will come. God has given us the means to be spiritual refreshing and renewal. If you are feeling dead, you don’t have to stay that way. Do what God has taught us for spiritual refreshing and renewal.

Closing Prayer:
Refreshing and Renewal

Topical

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Memory: 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

“B_ o_ y_ g_;  
s_ f_ i_ t_ f_; b_ m_ o_ c_; b_ s_.  
D_ e_ i_ l_.”

We ought know how to find spiritual refreshing and renewal.
There are things we can do to renew our spiritual life and enthusiasm.

I. Communicating with God.
A. Be listening to God.
Psalm 46:10

B. Be talking to God.

C. Try singing.

II. Seeking spiritual renewal through Christian fellowship.
A. Revitalization comes from association with Christians!

B. Christians receive encouragement from Christians.
Philemon 1:7 Philemon 1:20 Romans 1:11-12 1 Thessalonians 5:11

III. Renewal comes from active involvement.
A. Find strength by doing good deeds.
2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

B. Find strength by speaking good words.

IV. Repentance.
A. Is something hindering, separating?

B. Get right.
Psalm 139:23-24 Acts 3:19

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