

# Upholding the Weak

1Thes. 5:14 - “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”

# Who Did The Lord Consider Weak?

- Matt. 12:9-21
- John 6:26 - "Jesus answered them and said, Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."
- Isa. 42:1-4 - "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 2 He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. 4 He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law."

# Who Did The Lord Consider Weak?

- The Pharisees were the bruised reed and smoking flax
- Some Pharisees became believers; if one soul is saved, it is worth the effort
  - Acts 6:7 - “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”
  - Acts 18:8 - “Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household.”
  - Acts 15:5 - “But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed...”

# Who Did The Lord Consider Weak?

- Jesus had to wound their pride and shake them out of their stubbornness and sins.
- He withdrew, not from fear, but to give the Pharisees an opportunity to repent.
- And even though many did not, His generous and patient spirit toward them was noticed by the rest of the world, who in turn would be drawn closer to the Lord because of it.

# Who Did The Lord Consider Weak?

- A bruised reed is twisted or bent to the point that any more pressure would break it off completely.
- Smoldering flax is a wick that is just about to go out. Too much breath would snuff it completely.
- Both are symbols of a weak, feeble, misguided faith. Wrong must be opposed, but the goal is to bring people to God, not to drive the wicked away because “I’m right and they are all wrong.”

# Who Did The Lord Consider Weak?

- Do not begin with the assumption that all sinners and erring brethren are reprobates
  - 2Tim. 2:24-26 - “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”

# Who Did The Lord Consider Weak?

- The word of God commands that we get involved and uphold the weak.
  - 1Thes. 5:14 - “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”
- “Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.” (Paulo Freire)
- “Respect the old, when you are young. Help the weak, when you are strong. Forgive the fault, when you are right. Because, one day in life you'll be old, weak, and mistaken.”

# It Has Always Been God's Will

- God has always required His people to comfort the faint hearted, uphold the weak, and be patient with everyone.
  - Deut. 24:17 - “You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow's garment as a pledge.”
  - Psalm 10:18 - “To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, That the man of the earth may oppress no more.”

# It Has Always Been God's Will

- Psalm 41:1 - "Blessed is he who considers the poor; The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble."
- Psalm 82:3-4 - "Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy; Free them from the hand of the wicked."
- Isa. 1:17 - "Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow."
- Jer. 22:16 - "He judged the cause of the poor and needy; Then it was well. Was not this knowing Me? says the LORD."

# It Has Always Been God's Will

- The New Testament commands that Christians restore the wayward with gentleness
  - Gal. 6:1-2 - “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”
  - John 18:36 - “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

# It Has Always Been God's Will

- 2Cor. 10:1, 17-18 - "Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-- who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you... 17 But he who glories, let him glory in the LORD. 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends."
- 1Cor. 9:22 - "...to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

# It Is What Will Save The Weak

- The weak are not encouraged to remain weak, but tenderly nurtured in order to grow to full strength. If the weak are going to be saved, this is what will bring them to it.

# It Is What Will Save The Weak

- Growth is essential to putting evil from our lives
  - 2Peter 3:17-18 - “You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
- Growth is a process, not an immediate action

# It Is What Will Save The Weak

- Imitate Christ and encourage the weak to become strong
  - Rom. 15:1-7 - “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me. 4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. 5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.”

# It Is What Will Save The Weak

- Support the weak by helping to clear their path of obstacles
  - Heb. 12:12-15 - “Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled”

# It Is What Will Save The Weak

- Job was known for this
  - Job 4:3-5 - “Surely you have instructed many, And you have strengthened weak hands. 4 Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, And you have strengthened the feeble knees; 5 But now it comes upon you, and you are weary; It touches you, and you are troubled.”
- This is the example that Christ and Paul left for us
  - Acts 20:35 - “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

# There Is Hope

- Not all will repent or be restored. Many will not respond to this. But the souls that are saved by it are worth every sacrifice.
  - James 5:19-20 - “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”

# There Is Hope

- “The world does not consist of 100 percent Christians and 100 percent non-Christians. There are people (a great many of them) who are slowly ceasing to be Christians but who are still called by that name, and some of them are clergymen. There are other people who are slowly becoming Christians though they are not yet called so.” (C.S. Lewis)