

THE CONCEPT OF EXHORTATION
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

by
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PREFACE

It is very important for a Christian to be knowledgeable in every area of Christianity. The Christian must strive to be a good disciple and a student of the Word. One area of interest to the writer is the concept of exhortation. Little has been written concerning exhortation. This has prompted the writer to do some research to discover the Biblical teaching concerning exhortation. The word exhortation has been used in Christian circles, but what function does it have in the Body of Christ? This question needs to be answered.

The writer praises the Lord for the opportunity to write this paper. He was truly gracious and showed forth many insights through His Word. A word of thank you goes to my husband Tim who has been very patient and loving and a tremendous help during the writing of this thesis. He was a good source of encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of exhortation is expressed in the New Testament by the word παρακαλέω and its noun form παράκλησις. While most believers are familiar with the word exhortation, little study has been done regarding the actual meaning of this concept, and thus few understand how exhortation applies to them. It should be pointed out that the idea of exhortation is not based upon παρακαλέω and παράκλησις alone, but rather exhortation is a common theme throughout the New Testament and is conveyed by a number of additional words. However παρακαλέω and παράκλησις are the words most frequently used to represent the concept.

The attempt of this paper is to determine the usage and application of παρακαλέω and παράκλησις. Therefore, a word study has been done on these terms to determine their definition and usage. The word study deals with etymology, cognates, and synonyms, followed by an examination of uses in the Septuagint and in the Greek New Testament. The paper will emphasize the different uses in the Gospels and in the beginning of the Church Age as recorded in the book of the Acts and in the epistles.

Actually παρακαλέω and παράκλησις are general terms that have a number of usages in the New Testament.

In this paper it will be shown that they are not necessarily strong, forceful, or negative terms, as the English word exhort might suggest. While παρακαλέω is sometimes used to mean "to exhort" or "to admonish," it may also be used to mean "to encourage" or "to comfort." From this it can be seen that παρακαλέω has a wide usage. There seems to be a misunderstanding today of the meaning of the word exhortation. This paper will show that admonition is only one usage of παρακαλέω. Its basic meaning is of a more positive nature.

In the final section, it will be shown that all believers in the body of Christ today should practice exhortation. Some believe that exhortation is the sole responsibility of the pastor. However, this study will show that it is a general concept which should be exercised by all believers.

Another goal the writer intends to accomplish is to encourage the readers to exhort one another in love. It is very easy to exhort someone in the wrong spirit, but if it is to be done properly it should always be with the goal of benefitting the person who is being exhorted. All believers need encouragement and hopefully this paper will aid in understanding the proper exercise of exhortation.

This study has proved to be a profitable one. It has helped to remove any of the writer's thoughts that exhortation dealt solely with admonition and discipline.

On the contrary, it is a word which conveys encouragement and deals with the edification of the body of Christ.

Therefore, the writer will examine the concept of exhortation in the New Testament and will show that it is applicable for the believer in today's society. This paper will show that παρακαλέω and παράκλησις represent a concept that is primarily positive in nature and that it was intended to be practiced by all believers throughout the Church age.

CHAPTER I

WORD STUDY

Etymology

The Greek verb παρακαλέω is made up of two Greek words, the preposition παρά and the verb καλέω. παρά is used as a prepositional prefix which has the root meaning "beside," "near." The stem of καλέω is καλ-, and its basic meaning is "call."¹ Thus παρά and καλέω put together form a word which means "I call beside myself," "I beseech," "exhort," "console."²

The noun form of παρακαλέω is παράκλησις. It has the same prepositional prefix and stem as παρακαλέω. However, the addition of the suffix -σις shows that the word is a noun. Often when -σις appears it denotes the abstract name of an action.³ In this case παράκλησις means "exhortation," or "consolation."⁴

¹Bruce M. Metzger, Lexical Aids For Students of New Testament Greek (Princeton: Published by the Author, 1973), p. 59.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 42.

⁴Ibid., p. 59.

The etymology of a word is significant because it reveals the composition and function of a term. Thus from this etymological study of παρακαλέω and παράκλησις, it can be seen that their basic meaning involves "calling beside oneself." This could be for a number of purposes, but the most common applications were for the purpose of "exhorting," "beseeching," or "comforting." Thus by application παρακαλέω and παράκλησις also came to have these meanings.⁵

Cognates

In addition to παρακαλέω and παράκλησις, there are ten cognates related to the stem καλ-. This paper will only deal with those words that have the παρά- prefix because the others do not contribute to a better understanding of παρακαλέω and παράκλησις.

There are two other cognates that also have the παρά- prefix. The first of these, παράκλητος is a noun. It contains the suffix ending -τος, which denotes an agent of the verb.⁶ The usual meaning of παράκλητος is "one who appears in another's behalf, a mediator, intercessor,

⁵Otto Schmitz, "παρακαλέω," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. V, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 774 ff.

⁶Metzger, Lexical Aids For Students, p. 42.

helper."⁷ The King James Version translates this word "advocate" in 1 John 2:1. Other places where this word appears are in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7. Here the word is translated "comforter" in the King James Version and refers to the person of the Holy Spirit and conveys His role as the One who will be with the disciples after Christ has returned to heaven.

The other cognate, *συμπαράκαλέω*, is made up of the prefix *συμ* - added to *παρακαλέω*. The prefix *συμ*- is actually the form that the prefix *συν*- takes when it appears before labials.⁸ It has the meaning of "together with."⁹ Thus *συμπαράκαλέω* means "to encourage together with."¹⁰ It is found only once in the New Testament. This is in Romans 1:12. These cognates are mentioned only to show their relationship to the words being studied. From this it can be seen that they too have a consistent meaning that involves encouragement or comforting.

⁷William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973, 4th ed.), p. 623. (Hereafter referred as Lexicon.)

⁸H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 25.

⁹Metzger, Lexical Aids For Students, p. 84.

¹⁰Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 786.

Synonyms

There are five other words in the Greek New Testament which are also used to mean either "to encourage," "to exhort," "to implore," or "to admonish." However, each of these words is more specific than παρακαλέω and is limited in its usage and scope. None of the five encompasses all of the four ideas listed above, whereas, παρακαλέω does.

Vine lists only two of these words as being translated "to exhort." They are παραινέω and προτρέπω. According to Arndt and Gingrich, παραινέω means "to advise, recommend, urge."¹¹ It is made up of two words, παρά, meaning "near" and αινέω, meaning "to praise." Thus the literal meaning is to draw men to someone to praise or to encourage them. The second word, προτρέπω, also means "to urge, encourage, impel, and to persuade."¹² Both of these words have limited meanings when compared to παρακαλέω. παραινέω does not mean to comfort as does παρακαλέω, nor can προτρέπω mean to comfort. As for their appearances in the New Testament, παραινέω only appears twice, once in Acts 27:9 and once in 27:22, while προτρέπω only appears once in Acts 18:27. Thus παρακαλέω is by far the most widely used word in the New Testament

¹¹Ibid., p. 621.

¹²Ibid., p. 729.

which is translated "to exhort."

The third synonym is παραμυθέομαι . This word is made up of παρά and μυθέομαι . μυθέομαι is a verb meaning "to speak," "to tell," and also "to think," and "to deliberate."¹³ Thus παραμυθέομαι means "to encourage, cheer-up, console, comfort."¹⁴ παραμυθέομαι is found in John 11:19, 31; and 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

The fourth word μαρτύρομαι means "to testify," "bear witness," "affirm," "insist," or "implore."

μαρτύρομαι is the middle form of μαρτυρέω and they appear a total of seventy-eight times. It is interesting that Paul used παραμυθέομαι and μαρτύρομαι in 1 Thessalonians 2:11 along with παρακαλέω . The difference among these three words is that παραμυθέομαι has the idea of persuasion connected with it,¹⁵ whereas, παρακαλέω has the idea of motivating someone to action.¹⁶ However, the word μαρτύρομαι in this context means "to bear witness" in the sense of drawing from Biblical

¹³Gustav Stahlin, "μῦθος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. IV, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 766.

¹⁴Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 626.

¹⁵Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. III (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p. 26.

¹⁶Ibid.

truth to support their teaching. Thus these three words show a similarity in meaning, but of the three παρακαλέω most clearly leads to a new conduct on the part of the individual being instructed.

The fifth synonym is νουθετέω . It means "to admonish." It also can mean "to warn," "to instruct."¹⁷ The word appears eight times in the New Testament and is found in Acts 20:31; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Colossians 1:28, 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 14; and 2 Thessalonians 3:15. νουθετέω is different from παρακαλέω because it has a narrower definition. It does not include the idea of encouragement or comfort.

Thus the theme of exhortation is found through the New Testament and is carried by a number of different words. However παρακαλέω has a wider scope of application than does its synonyms. Therefore, in order to understand the New Testament concept of exhortation, παρακαλέω and παράκλησις need to be analyzed in greater depth. The synonyms need not be discussed any further. They were mentioned only to compare their meanings and usages with the words being studied.

¹⁷Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 546.

CHAPTER II

USAGES OF παρακαλέω AND παράκλησις

Usage in the Septuagint

By examining the usage of παρακαλέω and παράκλησις in the Septuagint and comparing this to the Hebrew text, it is possible to determine what Hebrew words in the Old Testament correspond to the Greek words παρακαλέω and παράκλησις. Such a background aids in understanding the New Testament concept of exhortation.

The verb παρακαλέω appears in the Septuagint ninety-six times and is a translation of fifteen different Hebrew terms. παράκλησις appears in the Septuagint fourteen times and is a translation of three different Hebrew terms. Of these terms translated by παρακαλέω, נחם is the most widely used word. It means "to be sorry" or "to console oneself."¹ In Genesis 37:35 נחם is used in reference to Jacob's grief over Joseph. Another reference

¹Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (London: Oxford University Press, 1907), p. 636. (Hereafter referred to as A Hebrew and English Lexicon.).

in Ruth 2:13 shows Ruth as being comforted by the Lord. Whenever παρακαλέω is used for נִחַם it is always related to the idea of comforting.²

A less commonly used Hebrew word translated by παρακαλέω is נִחַם, "to lead," "to guide to a water-place or station," and "to cause to rest there."³ It is used in Isaiah 40:11 in reference to God's guidance of His flock. Here the King James Version (KJV) translates נִחַם "to lead."

A third Hebrew word used is קָרָא. Its meaning is "to call," "to proclaim," and "to read."⁴ In Jeremiah 3:19 it is used to mean "to call" in reference to how God wanted to be addressed by the nation of Israel. In Proverbs 8:4 קָרָא is used to mean "to call" in the sense of "to beckon."

A fourth Hebrew word קָרָא means "be stout," "strong," "bold," and "alert."⁵ In the piel form of קָרָא it is translated "to encourage" in Deuteronomy 3:28.⁶

²Otto Schmitz, "παρακαλέω," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. V, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 777.

³A Hebrew and English Lexicon, p. 624.

⁴Ibid., p. 895.

⁵Ibid., p. 54.

⁶Ibid.

A fifth Hebrew word אָמַר means "to utter," or "to say."⁷ This word is used in Isaiah 35:4 in reference to encouraging those of a fearful heart.

A sixth word לָצַח means "to sport," "to take delight in," or "to delight."⁸ It is used in Isaiah 66:12 to mean fondle: ". . . you shall be carried on the hip and fondled on the knees" (New American Standard Bible).

It is interesting to note that in the following verse, verse 13, Isaiah specifically speaks of being comforted by God.⁹ Here נָחַם is used.

This study shows the Hebrew concepts which the translators of the Septuagint felt were communicated by the Greek word παρακαλέω . The other Hebrew words that are translated by παρακαλέω are used less frequently and do not contribute much to the understanding of the concepts conveyed by παρακαλέω or παράκλησις . Therefore, these words will not be dealt with in this paper.

Each of the Hebrew terms that is translated by παρακαλέω has a number of meanings. However from this study it can be seen that when the idea of comfort or encouragement was involved, the term was translated by the word παρακαλέω . Similarly it is used at times to

⁷Ibid., p. 55.

⁸Ibid., p. 1044.

⁹Schmitz, " παρακαλέω ," p. 777.

promise and to testify to the comfort of God which was given to His people when they were under His judgment.¹⁰ An example of this is found in Isaiah 40:1 where God says "Comfort, O comfort My people," in reference to Jerusalem whose sin has been remitted.¹¹ Here נָחַם is used to mean comfort.

From this brief discussion of the Hebrew terms, נָחַם is used most frequently to describe the concept of comforting. Consolation and comfort also encompass the idea of encouraging and uplifting someone. In some cases the source of the comfort is God, while at other times it comes from another person.

The Old Testament concept of comfort concerns not only relatives and friends but those who are strangers as well.¹² Job apparently considered it to be an honor for a man to be called "one who consoles the sorrowing," cf., Job 29:25.¹³ Thus, it can be said that the concept of consolation is widely used and is conveyed by παρακαλέω . παράκλησις is similarly used to translate the noun forms of the Hebrew verbs that have been discussed.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 778.

¹¹Ibid., p. 789.

¹²Ibid., p. 788.

¹³Ibid.

Usage in the Greek New Testament

A survey of the use of παρακαλέω and παράκλησις in the New Testament shows that παρακαλέω appears 109 times and παράκλησις appears twenty-nine times. παρακαλέω and παράκλησις have a variety of usages and can be classified in several different ways.

Dr. James Boyer has classified the use of παρακαλέω into three categories, based upon the effect that is desired. In the first category παρακαλέω is addressed to the mind and means "to admonish" or "to instruct." The second category pertains to the emotions. It means "to encourage," "to comfort," "to strengthen" or "to cheer." The third idea is addressed to the will and means "to exhort" or "to plead."¹⁴ From this classification it can be seen that παρακαλέω can be used to affect the mind, the emotions, or the will. In understanding the significance of παρακαλέω this is important to realize, and all three usages are found in the New Testament. However these three categories are so closely related in human experience that in many cases it is very difficult to state that a given usage of παρακαλέω falls exclusively under one category or the other.¹⁵ More often παρακαλέω

¹⁴James L. Boyer, "Greek Exegesis: Ephesians," (unpublished syllabus, Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1974), p. 57.

¹⁵Dr. Boyer, in a conversation with the writer, April, 1976, also acknowledged this.

includes two or even three of these applications at the same time. For instance an appeal to the will often has an effect in the area of the emotions as well. Therefore another system of classification will be used to categorize the usages of παρακαλέω.

Other scholars such as Arndt and Gingrich classified the usages of the word somewhat differently. They used four categories. The first of these is conveyed by "to call" or "to invite," the second by "to exhort" or "to encourage," the third by "to implore" or "to entreat," and the fourth by "to comfort" or "to cheer-up."¹⁶ In this paper the first category will be signified by "to call," the second category by "to exhort," the third category by "to entreat," and the fourth category by "to comfort." The second category, which was expressed as "to exhort" was the most common usage, while the third category, "to entreat" was the second most common usage. The third most common usage was "to comfort." The least used meaning was "to call." This classification is appropriate for a study of the usages of παρακαλέω. The categories are sufficiently distinguishable from one another, and at the same time encompass all of the uses of the word in the New Testament. For these reasons they will be used in this study.

According to Arndt and Gingrich, the noun παράκλησις

¹⁶Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 622.

has three categories of usages. The first one is "comfort," the second is "appeal" or "request" and the third is "encouragement" and exhortation."¹⁷ This word is most frequently used to mean "comfort," whereas παρακαλέω most often means "to exhort."

In the Gospels

The word παρακαλέω is mentioned in every Gospel except the Gospel of John. The incidents that occur in the synoptic Gospels where παρακαλέω is used do not appear in John's Gospel. In the Gospels παράκλησις appears only in Luke. Here it is found twice (Luke 2:25; 6:24) and in both cases has the meaning of "consolation." The most frequent meaning of παρακαλέω in the Gospels is that of "to entreat." It is generally used in relation to those in need of healing who turn to Jesus with their petitions.¹⁸ Illustrations may be taken from Matthew 8:5 where the Centurion approached Jesus and entreated Him to heal his servant, and from Matthew 14:36 where the men entreated Him to allow them to touch the hem of His garment so that they might be healed. Other illustrations are found in Mark 7:32 where the deaf man's friends entreated Jesus to heal the man's deafness and in Luke 8:41 when Jairus

¹⁷Ibid., p. 623.

¹⁸Schmitz, "παρακαλέω," p. 794.

entreated Jesus to heal his daughter. In the parable of the unmerciful slave in Matthew 18, the slave had implored the king to have mercy on him and to forgive his debt in verses 29 and 32.

The idea of "to call" is seen in Luke 15:28 in the parable of the prodigal son. The father of the prodigal son called to his elder son to join the feast which honored the prodigal son's homecoming.¹⁹

The only time παρακαλέω is used in the Gospels to mean "to exhort" is found in Luke 3:18 where John the Baptist exhorted the multitude in his message of repentance.

In the Acts

Luke used παρακαλέω twenty-three times and παράκλησις four times in the book of the Acts. Almost all of the appearances of παρακαλέω fall either under the category of "to exhort" or "to entreat." Whenever παρακαλέω is used in the Acts to mean "to exhort," it is used in reference to instruction. Under Dr. Boyer's classification this would fall under the category of being addressed to the mind: "to admonish," or "to instruct."²⁰ For instance, in Acts 2:40, Peter preached a message of repentance and was exhorting the hearers to accept his message and to repent.

¹⁹Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 622.

²⁰Boyer, "Ephesians," p. 57.

Similarly Barnabas exhorted his audience in Acts 11:23 so that they would cling unto God. He was gifted in providing encouragement to new Christians, and he exhorted the new converts with the purpose that they would be faithful and would persevere in the faith.²¹ Barnabas possessed the character of being a good man. He was full of the Spirit, and possessed vision for the work.²² He encouraged these people after he had witnessed to them. His encouragement followed his witnessing the effects of divine grace among the believers in Antioch.²³ His disposition was positive and he wanted to motivate his hearers in the proper direction of the Lord. He was the instrument used by God to urge these people to Himself. As a result, they responded to the Gospel message. Acts 14:22 also demonstrates the use of παρακαλέω to mean "to encourage." Here Paul and Barnabas had returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch and were strengthening

²¹Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison, eds., The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), p. 1144.

²²Homer A. Kent, Jr., Jerusalem to Rome (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1972), p. 33.

²³Henry Alford, The Greek Testament, Vol. II (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), p. 127.

the faith of the young churches they raised up.²⁴ This was done by further teaching in which they exhorted the new believers to continue in the faith.²⁵ This παρακαλῆς was used to incite encouragement which would strengthen their faith in the midst of the hardship and persecution they would inevitably have to face as they maintained their Christian witness.²⁶ This can also be viewed as a warning from Paul to these new Christians regarding the many tribulations they would encounter because of their faith.²⁷ These new converts lived in a heathen environment filled with idols, shrines, lasciviousness, lust, and luxury.²⁸ These people needed both to be strengthened and to be built up in their faith. Thus, it presents a positive step towards the advancement of their Christian growth and the advancement of the Gospel.

Judas and Silas who were considered prophets also

²⁴F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of the Acts (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), p. 296.

²⁵G. Campbell Morgan, The Acts of the Apostles (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924), p. 352.

²⁶Bruce, Commentary on the Book of the Acts, p. 296.

²⁷Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. III (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1930), p. 216.

²⁸Morgan, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 352.

exhorted believers in connection with teaching. This can be seen in Acts 15:32 where they had accompanied Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch. Their position as prophets (προφῆται ὄντες) "gives the reason for their superadding to the appointed business of their mission the work of exhorting and edifying."²⁹ They had brought to Antioch a letter expressing the decision of the Jerusalem Council. In addition by further teaching they were encouraging the brethren. Judas and Silas were competent men who knew the Word. Therefore, through the ministry of the letter and their verbal exhortation the people in Antioch received both consolation and encouragement.

Aside from exhortations and encouragements, entreaties were made as well. In Acts 19:31 the Asiarchs entreated Paul not to go into the theater because they feared for his life. A similar situation is recorded in Acts 21:12. Paul was at the house of the evangelist Philip, and the believers in Caesarea entreated him not to go to Jerusalem.

παρακαλέω was used only four different times in Acts with the idea "to call." It was used in Acts 8:31 when the Ethiopian eunuch invited Philip to sit with him. Another time is found in Acts 16:9 when in Paul's dream a man called Paul to Macedonia. The disciples called Peter to Joppa to raise up Dorcas in 9:38 and in 16:15 Lydia invited Paul and his associates to her home.

²⁹Alford, The Greek Testament, p. 171.

Luke uses παρακαλέω only twice in Acts to mean "to comfort." He used it in Acts 27:33-34 when Paul was encouraging those who were in the ship-wreck with him.

From these observations, the usages of παρακαλέω in the book of Acts primarily fit in two categories, "to exhort" and "to entreat." The other two usages were not as prevalent. The noun παράκλησις was only used four times. In Acts 13:15 and 15:31, παράκλησις is used to mean "encouragement." In Acts 4:36 it is used with reference to Barnabas, whose name means "son of consolation," and in Acts 9:31 it means "comfort."

In the Epistles

The usages of παρακαλέω and παράκλησις in the epistles are primarily found in the Pauline epistles. In them παρακαλέω appears fifty-one times and παράκλησις appears twenty times. By comparison, παρακαλέω is used eight times in the other epistles and παράκλησις appears three times. The basic meanings in Paul's usage of παρακαλέω fall into three categories, "to exhort," "to comfort," and "to entreat."

The first category, "to exhort" is the most frequent way that Paul uses παρακαλέω. An example of this can be seen in Romans 12:1 where Paul exhorts the brethren to present their bodies a living sacrifice. Paul is not rebuking the Roman believers but rather is encouraging them to put into action this basic concept of the Christian

life. In 1 Corinthians 4:16 Paul exhorts the Corinthians to be imitators of him. Again this does not suggest that they were not doing this. Rather it shows Paul's desire that they realize and continue practicing the example which he set for them. Often Paul also appeals to his co-laborers that they should carry forth the ministry of exhortation. In particular, his letters to Timothy and Titus expressed this (e.g. 1 Tim. 6:2, 2 Tim. 4:2, and Tit. 2:6, 15).

The second category is "to comfort." Paul used this meaning particularly in 2 Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians 1:4 Paul speaks of God's comfort toward us: ". . .who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted of God" (King James Version). In this one verse alone the concept of comfort appears four times. The verb παρακαλέω is used three times and each time it is translated "to comfort." The fourth word is the noun form παράκλησις, which is translated "comfort." This emphasizes God's work of comforting believers. Paul also deals with the concept of believers ministering to other believers in such a way as to comfort them. Thus in Ephesians 6:22 Paul wrote to the Ephesians that Tychicus would comfort their hearts.

The third category is "to entreat." This is the second most frequent way in which Paul uses παρακαλέω.

Paul uses this meaning in 1 Thessalonians 4:1. παρακαλοῦμεν reinforces the word ἐρωτῶμεν, which means "to request."³⁰ The exhortation which Paul gives here is made "in the Lord Jesus Christ." This shows that the authority of Paul's exhortation came from the authority of Christ. God used Paul to gain the loyalty of the Thessalonians. He set an example for them to live in a manner pleasing to Christ in 1 Thessalonians 2:11. The admonition is an urging and an appeal to the Thessalonians to draw them nearer to Christ. The exhortation in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 urges them to see the needs of certain people in the church.³¹ παρακαλέω in 2 Thessalonians 3:12 is similar to 1 Thessalonians 2:11 where the exhortation is in Christ, and Paul wants these disorderly people to be won back to the fellowship of the church.³² Paul had a fatherly attitude toward the Thessalonians. Through it he drew their attention to the obligations consequent upon the fact that they were in Christ.³³ The usage in these examples is of a harsher nature than what is found when the meaning of παρακαλέω is "to exhort" or "to comfort."

³⁰ Leon Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959), p. 117.

³¹ Ibid., p. 168.

³² Ibid., p. 256.

³³ Ibid.

Here παρακαλέω takes on a somewhat negative sense. However this was only done because the situation demanded it.

Paul's use of παράκλησις is less frequent than that of παρακαλέω. There are two categories of usages of the noun which he employs. They are "consolation" and "exhortation." "Consolation" is used more often than "exhortation." παράκλησις appears more frequently in 2 Corinthians than in any other Pauline epistles. In 2 Corinthians παράκλησις appears nine times to mean "consolation" and only twice does παράκλησις mean "exhortation." In Philippians 2:1 Paul speaks of consolation in Christ. This was mentioned to uplift the Philippians. Consolation is always a positive concept, whereas the nature of the exhortation must be determined by the context.

In the epistle to the Hebrews παρακαλέω appears four times and παράκλησις appears three times.³⁴ The only other epistles in which παρακαλέω appears are 1 Peter and Jude. In 1 Peter it appears three times and in Jude it appears once. παράκλησις does not occur in any other epistles. Both παρακαλέω and παράκλησις in these non-Pauline epistles primarily have the meaning of "to exhort" or "to encourage."

An interesting use of both παρακαλέω and παράκλησις appears in Hebrews 13:22. Here the entire

³⁴The book of Hebrews will be treated as a non-Pauline epistle in this paper.

epistle is referred to as an exhortation, and the readers are urged to accept it as such. The verse expresses the concern of the writer of the epistle for the well-being of his readers and the manner in which his words would be received. It is clear that the epistle was not written primarily to rebuke the readers, but to add to their knowledge and to encourage them.

The writer of Hebrews also urges people in the assembly to help one another by mutually encouraging one another (Hebrews 3:13, 10:25). *παράκλησις* is expressed as exhortation in Hebrews 12:5. In Hebrews 6:18 "consolation" is used and refers to the strong encouragement found in God's promise.

These are some of the examples in which *παρακαλέω* and *παράκλησις* are used. From these, it can be seen that the actual application of the terms needs to be determined by the context. The purpose may be "to encourage," "to exhort," or "to comfort." Sometimes *παρακαλέω* and *παράκλησις* have a negative concept in that the readers are being rebuked for doing something wrong or for failing to do what they should. However the widest usage is of a positive nature and conveys the sense of encouragement.

One further use of *παράκλησις* needs to be considered. In Romans 12:8 the gift of exhortation is mentioned. It is considered to be one of the spiritual gifts. According to Walvoord, exhortation is considered

to be the practical aspect of the teaching ministry in that it is an appeal for action.³⁵ However, the scope of exhortation is not at all limited to only the pulpit ministry, as shall be pointed out in the following chapter. Lenski states that Paul admonished believers to use what gifts they have and to admonish each other wherever there is need.³⁶ People often discover this gift in themselves when others seek them out for encouragement or consolation.³⁷ It is a blessed gift to be able to admonish and to encourage others based on what one knows from the Word of God. Exhortation is very practical. Those who possess this gift are to seek to find effective ways to lead others to greater Christian maturity.

³⁵John F. Walvoord, The Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), p. 170.

³⁶R. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1936), p. 764.

³⁷Kenneth Cain Kinghorn, Gifts of the Spirit (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 88.

CHAPTER III

BIBLICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF παρακαλέω

In this chapter the concept of exhortation as a part of the ministry of the pastor-teacher will be considered. Following this, the practice of exhortation by the layman will also be examined.

The Pastor-Teacher

Paul wrote epistles to Timothy and Titus for the purpose of instructing and encouraging them in their ministries. As observed in the preceding chapter, Paul uses παρακαλέω in his epistles with the primary meaning "to exhort." This can be seen to be true in his pastoral epistles. Paul is telling Timothy and Titus to practice exhortation as a part of their ministries. For this reason these pastoral epistles demonstrate the place which exhortation has in the ministry of the pastor-teacher. This usage is applied to a number of circumstances.

In these epistles Paul laid out some guidelines for young pastor-teachers. In 1 Timothy 5:1 he advised Timothy to exhort older men as fathers. Paul knew that some time in Timothy's ministry he would have to discipline church members who had committed a sin. These members could be of any age group. But in this particular

passage Paul made reference to older people, "the advanced age of persons does not give them license to do as they please."¹ Hence, there may be times when someone in Timothy's position will have to admonish these older persons. The admonition must have the tone of comfort, encouragement, and assurance. The same verb is used with reference to other age groups as well. The idea of this admonition is to be firm but not brutal, least of all toward the senior members of the local church.² These people are to be called aside and to be dealt with. The purpose of this may be to encourage, to comfort, to exhort, to entreat, or to appeal to. The application is not to excuse the elderly of their wicked ways. Rather the pastor needs to deal firmly but gently with them.³ The admonition is in the context of a father-son relationship. Tact, gentleness, and moderation should be employed. This application also may be applied to other members of the congregation regardless of age or sex. Without the exhortation, people may not realize their improper behavior. The purpose is to address someone and call to

¹Homer A. Kent, Jr., The Pastoral Epistles (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), p. 168.

²William Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 165.

³Ibid., p. 166.

his attention the matter which needs to be dealt with.

Another application of exhortation can be seen in relation to the issue of slaves and masters. Paul presented some instructions for Timothy to teach regarding this matter. In 1 Timothy 6:2 Paul requested Timothy to establish a standard concerning slaves in all the churches, because servant-master relationships were pitiful and correction was needed.⁴ Paul emphasized that proper relations must be developed especially between slaves and masters who had become believers. The desired relationship was that they should treat each other with respect. Thus, Timothy's responsibility as the leader was to keep teaching and exhorting them concerning their proper relationship among themselves. The outcome was to solve the dispute for the betterment of the body-life of the church.

In 2 Timothy 4:2 Paul charges Timothy to do a number of things including to reprove, rebuke, and exhort. The exhortation is to be applied to those who have been rebuked. This can be seen from Paul's statement because the rebuke comes before the exhortation.⁵ Those who

⁴R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1956), p. 697.

⁵Kent, Pastoral Epistles, p. 293.

have been rebuked then need encouragement and comfort. This is to be done on the basis of the Word. They need to be shown the means by which their sins can be forgiven and their spiritual lives strengthened.⁶ The fatherly approach must be taken and this should be done with tenderness.

The ability to exhort is essential for a pastor-teacher. Paul also wrote this to Titus. In Titus 1:9 he stated ". . . that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and confute the opposers." According to Kent, the pastor-teacher must be able to encourage and exhort even those who oppose God's truth by applying the healthful teaching of true doctrine. This ability must be functional in order to protect the congregation from the inroads of error and false teachers.⁷ Thus in Titus 2:15 Paul urges Titus to continue to exhort. Titus must not fail at his job as a pastor-teacher. He must admonish whenever the occasion calls for it. This means to impress upon the people the seriousness of the Word of God.

Hence, in these epistles, Paul instructed both Timothy and Titus to exhort. This exhortation encompasses the idea of urging, appealing, comforting and encouraging. Exhortation is a definite part of the ministry.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 222.

The Layman

The local congregation is not excluded from taking part in exhortation. The members of a congregation have a responsibility toward each other. Paul considered the act of exhortation to be an important function in the body of Christ. This can especially be seen in 1 Thessalonians. In chapter four Paul lays down his teaching regarding the dead in Christ. Following this he states, "comfort (παράκλησις) one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18). Later in 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Paul encourages the believers to "comfort yourselves together, and edify one another." This especially emphasizes the mutual nature of παράκλησις. Finally in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 Paul exhorts the believers to do a number of things. Included among them is to encourage (παράκλησις) the fainthearted. The fainthearted literally means those who are "small-souled," and they are the ones who especially grieved for their dead.⁸ The present tense of the verb shows that the believers were to keep on with their encouraging.

The book of Hebrews also emphasizes the importance of exhortation being practiced by the congregation. In

⁸Lenski, Thessalonians, p. 355.

Hebrews 10:24, 25 the writer states that believers must ". . . consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, . . ." Otherwise, there would be some who would fall out of fellowship. This fellowship involves concern for one another. Thus, in order to promote spiritual growth in the church, the believers must encourage one another. It may take any form, such as exhorting those who wavered from the church by urging them to be steadfast, comforting those whose Christian commitment has brought trouble and distress, or by being available when someone would be in need.⁹ In other words believers must invest their efforts to exhort one another and to help build up the body-life of the assembly. This promotes a cohesiveness in the body and brings believers closer to each other and to the Lord. The purpose of exhortation is to stimulate one another to love and good works as mentioned in Hebrews 10:24, 25.

In Hebrews 3:13 the writer exhorts the readers to encourage one another day by day. Kent points out that the word "exhort" here "denotes encouragement, rather

⁹Homer A. Kent, Jr., The Epistle to the Hebrews (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1972), p. 203.

than criticism or castigation."¹⁰ There must be a spirit of mutual helpfulness which makes the local body a spiritual unity.¹¹ Moreover, this unity makes for a strong and prosperous entity. Christians must engage in encouragement and helpful concern for their Christian friends. Otherwise, they will not succeed in this admonition. One of the greatest values in the local church is the coming together of believers to share each other's burdens. By coming together regularly, Christians can get acquainted with each other and provide spiritual comfort and encouragement in times of need. Thus, it is essential for believers to come and meet with each other to exhort one another.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 73.

¹¹Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF παρακαλέω

Christians have a responsibility to act on the revelational Word of God. In order for the Gospel message to be effective, Christians must keep Biblical commandments which include encouraging and admonishing one another. In this way the body of Christ can maintain a steadfastness in His Word and continue to grow and mature. Christians need to care and be concerned for one another. At times there appears to be a lack of encouragement, exhortation, and consolation in the local church. Christians need to encourage and provoke one another to good works. Instead, some Christians tend to provoke one another toward envy and strife. Therefore, the members of the body of Christ need to be stimulated by one another and in the right direction by means of encouragement and exhortation.

Scriptural Definitions For Christians

To Exercise παρακαλέω

Scripture definitely demands Christians to exhort one another. The purpose is for the edification of the members of the body of Christ. Exhortation, consolation, and encouragement are characteristics of caring for one

another. However, for the most part believers have not been bringing the Word of God to bear upon one another as they should.¹ Too many times they are afraid that this will offend another brother. But in Acts and in the Pauline epistles, illustrations abound with exhortations being made by the apostles "in the name of Christ." This means that the exhortation was made by the authority of Christ. Believers also exhort "in the name of Christ" today when their exhortation is based upon principles found in Scripture. As Coiner states, the Christian faith should operate in community toward mutual edification and fraternal correction. This activity of taking care of one another with the Word of God is the flexing of the spiritual muscles of the Church.²

Hebrews 10:25 clearly states that Christians are not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. One of the purposes that believers assemble together is to exhort and to encourage one another. The nature of encouragement first involves a believer who has been encouraged himself. This could be by another Christian or directly from the Bible itself (2 Cor. 1:4). Such a believer radiates a Christian confidence which is blended with inner

¹Harry G. Coiner, "Living Toward One Another with the Word of God," Concordia, 36 (October, 1965), p. 614.

²Ibid., p. 615.

peace and joy.³ This inner confidence stems from a believer having a close walk with Christ. This should then be the source of his exhortation towards others. Thus he can be a source of encouragement to others.

Coiner states that "there are unmistakable signs in the Church that many people need the fraternal care of fellow Christians, but so few Christians are able or willing to do anything about it."⁴ Thus, many a once-faithful follower has fallen away because no one bothered or cared enough to lift him up with a word or hand in time of need.⁵ This may be a result of a lack of sensitivity on the part of some Christians. This is especially improper since Scripture clearly states that one of the main purposes that believers are to come together in a local church is to meaningfully stimulate one another to be closer to Christ and to each other. Kilinski stated that exhortation is a motivation for action.⁶ However it seems that people are sometimes

³David Haney, The Idea of the Laity (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 152.

⁴Coiner, "Living Toward One Another," p. 613.

⁵Haney, The Idea of the Laity, p. 150.

⁶Kenneth K. Kilinski and Jerry C. Wofford, Organization and Leadership in the Local Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 51.

involved with people in a role and not on the personal level.⁷ Yet Christ's ministry was people centered. He ate with publicans and sinners, Matthew 9:10, 11; Mark 2:15, 16. His purpose was to witness to them and to demonstrate His impartiality toward people of different backgrounds.

Similarly the intentions of those who exhort one another should be for edification and spiritual growth of the one being exhorted. Sin withdraws a person from fellowship with God. That is why admonition is needed to firmly but tenderly draw him back to the fold. The result of exhortation will then bring him into closer union with God.

The New Testament makes it clear that everyone in the body of Christ is expected to be involved in exhortation. Paul's pastoral epistles give guidelines to pastor-teachers as to how to exhort and to admonish their congregation. In 1 Thessalonians, however, all members of the congregation are told to encourage and to exhort one another. This can also be seen in Hebrews, where all believers are encouraged to meet together continually and to admonish, to encourage, to comfort, and to exhort each other.

⁷Coiner, "Living Toward One Another," p. 613.

Unfortunately, it would seem that many Christians think that the spiritual care of others is not their responsibility but the pastor's job. This is a false assumption. The reason for this false assumption is a lack of proper understanding of Scriptural principles regarding church polity. This has resulted in a separation of clergy and laymen that is not justified by Scripture. However other factors also contribute to the failure of believers to practice exhortation. When exhortation is of a negative nature, such face to face confrontation is often difficult. A person may fear that he will offend the one he is exhorting, or he may fear what the one being exhorted may think of him. Thus, it is easier to let someone else perform the task. But admonition and exhortation is a gift and a privilege as well as a responsibility. It should be exercised so that everyone in the congregation can benefit from it. The result will be a closer relationship to one another in the body of Christ.

How Christians Can Exercise

Παρακαλέω

Christians should count exhortation as a privilege because it provides a unique opportunity to stir up one another in the Word. It is also a responsibility which cannot be avoided. The exhortation should always be directed to the need of the person. If he is depressed the exhortation

may simply be a word of encouragement. If the need is for someone to be involved in serving the Lord, the exhortation should stir up a desire to be involved in the work of the church. At the same time this may be accompanied by pointing out his abilities. If the need concerns the conduct or speech of another believer, the exhortation may come as an admonition. If a brother has sinned, he should be taken aside by another brother who will call to his attention his sin so that he may recognize it and deal with it. Exhortation should always be grounded in Scripture, and as Kent mentions, it must be accompanied by tact, tenderness, firmness, and love. Prayer should both precede and follow the exhortation.

The purpose of exhortation is always for spiritual growth of believers and the advancement of the Gospel. This is the main purpose why Christians must exercise it. In order to be effective exhorters, pride and self must first be humbled. He must think of others as being more important than himself (Phil. 2:1-4).

New believers have special needs which include encouragement. Unfortunately some Christians seem to have little patience with new-born Christians. These new converts obviously need guidance, care, and discipline. A new brother in Christ needs to be taken aside by someone who will spend time in the Word with him so he may learn to understand what his needs are. If he sinned,

he needs to be admonished in a tactful and loving manner. That is one reason why insensitivity has no part in Christianity. On the other hand the proper exercise of exhortation will greatly help new believers to become mature Christians whose lives demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit.

The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:26-27 says, "If one member suffers, all members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all members rejoice with it. We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones, and we share in his life; because we are members of his body, we share in his life; if one member suffers, all members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all members rejoice with it. We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones, and we share in his life; because we are members of his body, we share in his life." This passage is often used to illustrate the unity of the church. The basic responsibility toward one another is to love one another. Jesus spoke of this in John 13:34 where he said that believers are to love one another as he loved them, and in this way will manifest that they are his disciples. The Christian community is a big family and everyone is to treat one another like members of a family.

Exhortation has two sides, a negative side and a positive side. The negative side of exhortation is to rebuke, to warn, and possibly to discipline the offender. However, the end product is positive. The positive side takes the form of encouragement, comfort, and consolation. However both aspects of exhortation are always for the believer's own good and for the good of the body of Christ.

Often Paul uses illustrations that picture the church as a body. For instance, he talks about Christians being the body of Christ in Romans 12:4-5.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The admonition that is found in Hebrews 3:13 and Hebrews 10:25 sets the pace for Christians to exhort one another. The reason for this is so that members of the body of Christ can interact with and build up one another in Christ. The basic responsibility toward one another is to love one another. Jesus spoke of this in John 13:34 where He said that believers are to love one another as He loved them, and in this way will manifest that they are His disciples. The Christian community is a big family and everyone is to treat one another like members of a family.

Exhortation has two sides, a negative side and a positive side. The negative side of exhortation is to admonish, to warn, and possibly to discipline the offender. However, the end product is positive. The positive side takes the form of encouragement, comfort, and consolation. However both aspects of exhortation are always for the believer's own good and for the good of the body of Christ.

Often Paul uses illustrations that picture the Church as a body. For instance, he talks about Christians being in one body, the body of Christ in Romans 12:4-5.

All members of the body have different functions by which they contribute to each other's needs (Rom. 12:13).

Thus it is very important that these functions be exercised. An application of this can be seen in Hebrews 3:13 and 10:25. There are complaints that many local churches today are cold and unfriendly. The only way to overcome this is to practice what the two verses in Hebrews teach, namely, to exhort, to admonish, to comfort, and to encourage one another. Christians have to invest their time toward one another. Simply complaining about the coldness of the church will not remedy the problem. In fact complaining without appropriate action only contributes to the coldness of the church. Furthermore, it also demonstrates a disobedient spirit towards God's teaching regarding the assembling together and encouraging of one another.

It is God's will for Christians that they obey His commandments. He encourages them by His tender kindness and mercy and comforts them when there is sorrow and grief. Hence, just as God encourages in a positive manner, believers are to do likewise toward one another. Hebrews 10:24 states that believers are to consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (NASB). Encouragement means moral support and positive action. This means that a Christian is to encourage and to exhort a brother to do good works as unto God. Another reason why exhortation is so important is that it is the key

toward getting along with one another. Thus admonition and encouragement have an important function in that they produce blessings which will enrich the lives of the believers involved.

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