

Be of Good Cheer!

There are only ten places in Scripture where the word “cheer” is used, eight times “good cheer” is used and only seven places the command, “be of good cheer” is used. The word “cheer” in English means: make happier, brighten, buoy up, enliven, exhilarate, hearten, gladden, uplift, perk up, boost, encourage, inspire. The origin of our word “cheer” comes to us from Middle English, which in turn came to us from Old French *chiere* ‘face,’ which originated from late Latin *cara*, handed down from Greek *kara* ‘head.’ The original sense was [face,] hence [expression, mood,] later specifically [a good mood.] The Koine Greek word used in the New Testament is: **tharséō**, which means to have courage, be bold, take comfort, to be unafraid. Those who have studied this Greek word say it means “bolstered because warmed up,” derived from “thársos,” meaning, “emboldened from within” – properly, bolstered within which supports unflinching courage – literally, to radiate warm confidence (exude “social boldness”) because warm-hearted. Further ramification and dissection of this word “tharséō” means “emboldened to show courage” and refers to God bolstering the believer, empowering them with a bold inner-attitude (to be “of good courage”). For the believer, “tharséō” (“showing boldness”) is the result of the Lord infusing His strength by His in-working of faith (in-birthed persuasion). Showing this unflinchingly bold courage means living out the inner confidence (inner bolstering) that is Spirit-produced. Scholarship tells us the nuance is determined by the context as found in the Scriptures. I would like for us to examine the seven times the phrase “be of good cheer” is mentioned in the Bible and see if we can shed light on what this expression means to us from the Scriptural context in which it is used. I see at least five ways this expression is used. We may “be of good cheer” because:

1. Our sins are forgiven.

“And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matthew 9:2). In this context Jesus surprisingly says to a crippled man, *“thy sins be forgiven.”* Our Lord was correlating this man’s illness with being crippled. This, in fact, is exactly what sin does. A person may appear healthy on the exterior but inside they are emotionally and spiritually crippled because of his iniquities. So when sins are forgiven we may walk, skip and run! I appreciate the Lord Jesus saying later in this context, *“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house”* (Matthew 9:6). Not only was the crippled man healed of his infirmity, but also he was enabled to take up his bed and carry it! This shows us that a forgiven person is not only relieved of his infirmity, but he is now of great service to God and mankind. Thank God, a person who has been touched by the forgiving life of Jesus can be of great service and blessing to others! The Bible says, *“Blessed be*

God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (II Corinthians 1: 3, 4). What comfort we who have enjoyed God’s forgiveness can supply to others because we ourselves are first participants of the same mercy we offer them!

2. We do not have to be dominated by fear.

“But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid” (Matthew 14:27). *“For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid”* (Mark 6:50). In Matthew’s narration we see this is when not only Jesus walked on the water, but so also did Peter. In our story when Peter took his eyes off Jesus and concentrated rather on the waves below his feet, he began to sink. We, too, will sink with fear when we look to our circumstances instead of our Lord. What a magnificent lesson this is for all of us! We need to always remember the Bible says, *“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father”* (Romans 8:15). Fear can lock us up and paralyze us! According to the Bible, if we can say, *“Abba, Father”*, we need never fear. Fear can make us act crazy, whereas the antithesis of “losing it” is finding power to live above fear through our Lord and Savior, *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”* (II Timothy 1:7).

3. We have peace with God and the peace of God.

Just hours before our Lord died on the cross He said, *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33). In salvation we are granted peace with God: *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1). God has not only provided peace with God, but He has granted to us the very nature of God, *“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:7). The same peace that our Lord had as He approached the cross can be ours by His marvelous grace. There is enough grace and love in God to cheer up the entire world. Please notice when you are gathered together with God’s people the overwhelming peace that is shared in this assembly.

4. God is not finished with us.

In the apostle Paul’s ministry we see the Lord telling him to “be of good cheer.” The Word says, *“And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome”* (Acts 23:11). In the Mediterranean Sea Paul was caught in the throes of a *“...tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon”* (Acts 27:14b). The storm was so bad that it destroyed the ship and the survivors were washed ashore, but before there was any assurance that life was going to be saved, Paul was blessed to have the good comfort of the Lord by His side, *“And*

now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve” (Acts 27: 22,23). Perhaps I am talking to someone who believes he or she is all “washed up.” Do not be discouraged, be of good cheer. As long as you are breathing, God can use you; He is not finished with you yet!

5. God’s promises are reinforced by His omnipotence.

Returning to the story of Paul’s deliverance from the cyclonic tempestuous storm, we see he was able to say, *“Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me” (Acts 27:25).* We who believe in Jesus may be of good cheer by standing on the promises of God’s Word. Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. said, “Behind every command of God He places omnipotence.” Omnipotence means “all power.” In the final chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus gives us great confidence by saying, *“..All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18b).* Then our Lord gives us the awesome great commission when He said, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19,20a).* How do we have that kind of power? Because Jesus promised, *“...Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world...” (Matthew 28: 20b).* God places His power behind His Word. We should stand firm because we have not only God’s presence, but we have God’s Word on it! *“...For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name” (Psalm 138:2).* So be of good cheer!

-Pastor Pope-

© 2012 [Christchurch Baptist Fellowship](http://www.christchurchbaptist.org/), Houston, Texas, Johnny Pope Pastor
<http://www.christchurchbaptist.org/>