

Paraklēsis: Contact

I got a text from a good friend a little while ago saying, "I was thinking of you. I'd like to catch up. Do you have some time to talk at 12:15 today?" The message made me happy, but I was sad that I was not free at that time. **I was busy**. After that, I thought about how my friend is so busy that he needs to **schedule a call** with a friend. I didn't consider or realize that I am in the same boat; I am taking the log out of my own eye... A couple of days later, we did have a conversation and **it lifted me up** for the rest of the day.

*Therefore encourage one another and **build up one another**, just as you also are doing.
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)*

I don't believe that his call was explicitly meant to encourage me. But, it did. Just knowing that he had thought of me and took the time to schedule me into his busy life and call made me feel loved. He built me up in that moment. **I received a blessing**.

And then I got a call from a brother with some truly exciting news that lifted me even higher. He lives with some daily trials that most of us do not have to deal with. I am grateful that I do not have his struggles. But he experienced a life changing event that showed me (and him) that God is loving him and blessing him and showing him the Way, the Truth and the Life! His struggles will not likely evaporate, but he does now and forever more have a powerful, effective, and everlasting tool to combat the spiritual enemy. While it is difficult for me to empathize with him regarding his life struggle, I can share with him the joy of having God show up in such a vivid and empowering way. I had a similar experience in my life. A switch was flipped for him so that he now sees the love God has for him, the path God made for him, and the worth that he has. **His great news was received by me with immense joy and relief**. Again, as the recipient of a contact, I received a blessing.

*How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And **brings good news of happiness**, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices, They shout joyfully together; For they will see with their own eyes When the LORD restores Zion. (Isaiah 52:7-8)*

When we take, make, schedule the time to **connect with another member of the Body**, they get a real benefit. They are lifted up. They receive joy. Their confidence and self-worth are increased. The contact is an expression of love, and we all want to receive love. Afterall, we are made in His image, and that is all He wants... He wants His children to love Him. There is even a reward for those who **choose to give**. Yes, making the effort to contact another is like giving a cup of cool water to a thirsty child.

*"For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he **will not lose his reward**. (Mark 9:41)*

Taking the time, or making the time, to call on a friend is a worthy and lucrative investment.

*"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you** from the foundation of the world. 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the*

*extent that **you did it to one of these brothers of Mine**, even the least of them, you did it to Me. (Matthew 25:34-40)*

In this analogy spoken by Messiah, the water quenches the thirst, but that's not all that happens in the transaction. Messiah tells us that **the giver receives a reward**, inheritance of the Kingdom! There are also immediate, physical benefits to keeping contact with brethren. These benefits are things like knowing what to pray for, sharing joy, planning meetings, etc. But there is another spiritual blessing that comes.

*Then **those who feared the LORD spoke to one another**, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and **a book of remembrance** was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. "They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." (Malachi 3:16-17)*

The children of God "spoke to one another" and that pleased God. Do you suppose that us speaking to one another is simply us "keeping in touch," or sharing our news with each other? I do – I think that this scripture is encouraging us to share our lives with one another. We should be sharing things like what we are studying, what trials we are enduring, what our joys have been, how God has shown up in our lives, as well as the mundane things like family, health, worries, work, and weather... This is how relationships grow and mature. This is how **the fabric and the being of Messiah's bride makes herself ready**. This is how unity develops.

I am not sure if this "book of remembrance" is the same book that is mentioned in Exodus 32, Psalms 56, Daniel 7, Revelation 20, and others. Surely God does not need to record things in a physical book, but whatever it looks like, I want to have my name in it!

*Add iniquity to their iniquity, And may they not come into Your righteousness. May they be blotted out of **the book of life** And may they not be recorded with the righteous. But I am afflicted and in pain; May Your salvation, O God, set me securely on high. (Psalms 69:27-29)*

*"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, **everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued**. (Daniel 12:1)*

*All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in **the book of life of the Lamb** who has been slain. (Revelation 13:8)*

So, please, do us all a favor. Pick up the phone and call someone who would not expect it. I assure you that both of you will be blessed by it.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)

Peace to you and glory to God!

-Nate