

# Cheer Up! Take Heart!

From time to time, we all need encouraging. Our dear Lord knows this. There is an expression which the Lord Jesus used which has been translated into various English equivalents: “be of good cheer”, “be of good courage”, “take heart”, “take courage”. We find Him using it four times as He addressed four factors that drain our enthusiasm, eat at our courage and destroy our joy.

**Guilt:** In Matthew 9:2, Jesus looked at the helpless paralytic and said “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” Of course the paralytic wanted to walk, but real freedom and joy come from accepting God’s forgiveness.

**Sickness:** In Matthew 9:22, there was a woman who lived with the frustration of being sick for 12 years. She knew that Jesus was her only hope. Her heart must have sunk as her secret plan to touch Jesus became public. “Take heart, daughter,” Jesus said, “your faith has healed you.” She was thus encouraged to take more steps of faith.

**Uncertainty:** In Matthew 14:27, the exhausted disciples were in a boat, in a storm at night, without Jesus. Then they thought they saw something they had never seen before – a ghost! It terrified them. Jesus walked up to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” What calms our fears and cheers our hearts is the presence of Christ.

**Rejection:** The apostle Paul did his best but things went wrong. In Acts 23:11 we find him hurting, alone, and in prison. His evangelistic efforts were opposed, his teaching contradicted, his motives questioned. Usually at night, our problems seem even larger, and in one of those sad nights the Lord stood by Paul and said, “Take courage!” There’s still more work I want you to do.

Perhaps you are going through difficult times. The Lord’s words are also for you: “Cheer up! Take heart! I know everything you have done, and I have forgiven you. You are not alone, I am here standing by your side. I still have more work for you to do. Don’t be afraid to exercise your faith again. Hold My hand and let’s take another step forward.”

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