



FRANKLIN ROAD

baptist church

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THE FILE



ISRAEL HAD A PROBLEM. 1 SAMUEL 13:19-20 SAYS "NOW NO BLACKSMITH COULD BE FOUND IN ALL THE LAND OF ISRAEL, FOR THE PHILISTINES SAID, 'OTHERWISE THE HEBREWS WILL MAKE SWORDS OR SPEARS.' 20 SO ALL ISRAEL WENT DOWN TO THE PHILISTINES, EACH TO SHARPEN HIS PLOWSHARE, HIS MATTOCK, HIS AXE, AND HIS HOE." IT WAS A POWERFUL AND STRATEGIC MOVE ON THE PART OF THE PHILISTINES TO MAINTAIN A CORNER ON THE METAL WORKING TRADES. BECAUSE OF THIS WE'RE TOLD THAT THE

ISRAELITES WERE AT THEIR MERCY EVEN WHEN IT CAME TO SHARPENING THEIR FARM IMPLEMENTS. BEING FORCED TO GO THERE WAS EXPENSIVE, INCONVENIENT AND HUMILIATING.

WE HAVE A PROVERB. "IRON SHARPENS IRON, SO THAT ONE MAN SHARPENS ANOTHER." WE UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF USING A METAL FILE TO SHARPEN AND METAL KNIFE OR MOWER BLADE. IRON SHARPENING IRON.

SO WHAT? IS THERE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ISRAEL'S PROBLEM AND OUR PROVERB? YES! NOTE THAT THE PROVERB INDICATES WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE SHARPENING AND HELPING ONE ANOTHER. THIS IS A PART OF THE ONE-ANOTHERING PROCESS THAT WE'VE BEEN GOING OVER IN CHURCH ON SUNDAY MORNINGS. BUT WHAT ABOUT WHEN WE DON'T HAVE THE FILES? IN THAT CASE WE'RE FORCED TO GO TO THE PHILISTINES FOR ENCOURAGEMENT, COUNSELING AND ASSISTANCE. THIS IS EXPENSIVE, INCONVENIENT AND HUMILIATING. ISN'T THERE A BETTER WAY?

THE REAL PROBLEM IS NOT THAT WE DON'T HAVE THE FILE AND THEREBY SHARPEN EACH OTHER. THE ISSUE IS THAT WE DON'T USE THE FILE WE HAVE. WE'RE HESITANT TO GET TOO INVOLVED WITH EACH OTHER. WE'RE OFTEN NOT EAGER TO ENCOURAGE. WE'RE CONTENT WITH DULLNESS.

WE NEED TO GET OUT OUR FILES AND WORK WITH EACH OTHER. A FILE CAN CERTAINLY SHARPEN METAL. I THINK OF DAVID AND JONATHAN AS FRIENDS WHO KNEW HOW TO FILE EACH OTHER, MAKING BOTH BETTER. (YOU CAN READ OF THEM IN 1 SAMUEL 18-20.) A FILE CAN ALSO SMOOTH METAL BY KNOCKING OFF THE ROUGH BURRS. JESUS DID THIS IN HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH PETER. WE READ IN JOHN 21 HOW JESUS HELPED PETER UNDERSTAND RESPONSIBILITY AND OVERCOME GUILT. THEN TOO, A FILE CAN SHAPE METAL CREATING SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FROM WHAT OTHERWISE WOULD NOT BE SO. I'M REMINDED OF PAUL AND TIMOTHY'S FRIENDSHIP IN THIS REGARD. READ 1 TIMOTHY 1:18-19 AND SEE HOW PAUL ENCOURAGES TIMOTHY THERE.

NEXT TIME YOU NEED ENCOURAGEMENT DON'T GO TO THE PHILISTINES. COME TO CHURCH, BRING YOUR FILE AND WATCH GOD WORK!

LOOKING UP!

PASTOR CHUCK CIRCLE