

# More Refreshers, Please!

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     You might be wondering why, when I've got the whole Bible to choose from this evening, I decided to speak on refreshers. It wasn't just so I could put some packs of sweets on your pews, but please do feel to suck or to crunch if it still takes you while I'm speaking.

The reason why I've chosen to speak on this is to do with 2 Timothy. We've just finished 2 Timothy, and in 2 Timothy there's a character called Onesiphorus. Onesiphorus, I think, is one of the great unsung heroes of the New Testament.

He's been described as Paul's pastor because he was the man who went to Paul when he was in prison and who ministered to him. And I was thinking in a slightly random way that Onesiphorus sounds a bit like Onesimus.

Onesimus is the subject, as you know, of the book of Philemon. The two names mean much the same thing. They're people who are profitable. I then thought, oh, these two men actually have quite a lot of similarities.

They came from fairly close together. Onesimus was from Colossae, and Onesiphorus was from Ephesus, both in what was then Asia, the province of Asia, today part of Turkey.

[ 1 : 1 4 ]     Both men ended up in Rome. Onesiphorus, perhaps they're in business. Onesimus, because he had run away from his master Philemon. Both men, when they were in Rome, met Paul.

Now, not at the same time, because Onesimus was during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome when he was under house arrest. Onesiphorus was towards the end when Paul was in trial for his life.

So it was during Paul's second and much more arduous imprisonment. And Paul wrote very warmly about both of them to Philemon and to Timothy. And in writing about them, both times Paul wrote about being refreshed.

That eventually got to the point. Paul wrote about being refreshed. And I thought, this is something that was obviously really important to Paul. That these men had refreshed him, and it made quite a big difference to him in difficult circumstances.

I thought, I can't remember ever hearing anyone speaking about being a refresher. I've heard of people speaking about encouraging, usually using Barnabas as the prime example. But never heard of anyone speaking about what it means to refresh others.

[ 2 : 1 9 ]     So I thought, this evening, we'll redress the balance a bit. We're going to think about the importance of refreshing others. And we're going to encourage each other to be refreshers. I'm going to do something that's a little bit different from the normal this evening.

I'm going to name names. So as we go along, I'm going to mention a few people who I think are really good examples in our church. Of those who show the characteristics of refreshers.

Now, please don't be offended if I don't mention you. You may well be as good as anyone else at it. And it's just I didn't have to think of you. They're only examples. But I think it's good to recognize these people.

And we'll come back to that towards the end. The importance of recognizing other people. But let's begin with God's word. We're going to read a few verses from Philemon and then a few verses from 2 Timothy.

If you want to turn to them. It's Philemon. Only has one chapter. So nice and easy. And we're going to read verse 7 and then from verse 20 onwards. So Paul writes to Philemon, your love has given me great joy and encouragement because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.

[ 3 : 23 ] And then he goes on a bit and he has his appeal to Philemon about Onesimus explaining how he's become a Christian, asking him to receive him back. And in verse 20, he says, I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord.

Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

So that's Philemon and Onesimus. Let's move over to 2 Timothy. 2 Timothy chapter 1. And just a few verses to talk about Onesiphorus there. 2 Timothy chapter 1. I'm reading from verse 16.

And Paul writes, May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me.

May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day. You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus. Now we will read a few more verses as we go along this evening.

[ 4 : 27 ] But for the moment, I'm sure God will bless his word to us. So what does it mean to refresh somebody? Well, I think the best way to understand that is to understand a little bit about the Greek word that is translated as refresh in our New Testament.

And it's exactly the same Greek word as it's used elsewhere to talk about rest. Rest. So rest and refresh, the most common word for refresh in the New Testament, they're the same word.

Now I guess we could say that rest is what I do to myself. I have a rest. I go to sleep or whatever. Refreshment is what I do to somebody else. I rest them.

I give them rest. Now sometimes that could be in a literal, physical sense. That we say to someone, I want to help you in your work for the Lord.

I want to give you a bit of a break from it. And I'll take over what you're doing for a while. A true example, a few weeks ago, John Gemmo came to me and he said, you don't need to come to Friday Fun Zone this evening.

[ 5 : 31 ] I'll do your door duty for you. Now I love being at the door at Friday Fun Zone. It's a great privilege. But I was quite tired. There were family reasons why it was quite good to be at home. And I was really glad of that period of rest.

It wasn't exactly a three-month sabbatical, but it really meant quite a lot to me. And I think it's really good we all need rest from a Christian activity. Sometimes we can say to someone, assuming we've got the gifts and the ability to do it, I'll just take your duty for a short time to give you a rest from it.

But I don't think that's actually the main meaning of the word refresh or what rest means in this context. It's not rest from work, I'd suggest.

It's rest in work. So refreshing is about reviving us in the work we're doing. It is about re-energizing us. It is about giving us a real peace and a confidence in what we do at a time when we might be flagging, when we might be finding things a little bit difficult.

And I think rest is different from encouragement in an important sense. Now, the two are obviously quite related. Encouragers will also be good refreshers. But I suggest encouragement is largely something that we focus on with younger Christians.

[ 6 : 49 ] Christians, we want to encourage younger Christians to serve the Lord and to be involved in service. And we encourage them to do things. And we encourage them in the things they do to help them to develop.

And that's great. And that is a very, very important ministry. If we think of Barnabas as being the classic example of an encourager, who did he encourage? He encouraged the young church at Jerusalem when he sold his field. He encouraged the apostle Paul as he was a young Christian.

He went and got him from Tarsus and took him to Antioch. He encouraged the young church at Antioch, young Christians there. He encouraged his nephew John Mark, again a young Christian. And he didn't give up on him when Mark failed the first time round.

So largely, not entirely, but largely the ministry of encouragement is directed towards younger Christians. I suggest the ministry of refreshment is more often directed towards those who've been on the road for a while.

We're just starting out in a race. Then we don't generally need a rest very quickly. As we're going on, as we've been doing it for quite a long time, at that point we've reached the stage where actually a rest and refreshment is something that we really need.

[ 7 : 56 ] So I wouldn't make too big a distinction in it, but I think probably refreshment is more helping those who've been on the road for a while to keep going in their ministry. And hopefully encouragement is helping those who are just starting out in their ministry for the Lord.

Now before we think about these two characters, particularly a few others in the New Testament, I thought it would be good to think for a few minutes, well why is it that we need refreshers? Why do we need to be refreshed?

And as we think about this, we're also going to note that refreshment is very much a work of God. We'll think about what God does over the next few minutes, and then we'll think of some of the examples in the New Testament and one or two from Bruntsfield a little bit later on.

So why do we need refreshers? Well we need refreshers when we're going through times of difficulty. We have Paul here in 2 Timothy, and he's in prison.

And everyone has deserted him, and he's on trial for his life. And it really means a lot to him that someone is able to come in and to refresh him and to revitalise and revive him and give him something of the joy of the Lord again.

[ 9 : 08 ] And in lots of circumstances, we probably need that too when we face problems in our lives. Not hopefully imprisonment, but if we have problems with illness, with work, with family.

And lots of different situations where something happens in our life, and we think this is making the going really hard for me. And someone can then come along and help us and refresh us in our time of difficulty.

There's a verse in 2 Peter. 1 Peter 4, where Peter writes, What does it mean the Spirit rests?

The Spirit's not taking a rest. The Spirit resting on you, I think, is the Spirit refreshing you, reviving you, revitalising you. You're being insulted for the name of the Lord. You're being persecuted in your Christian faith.

And in a very special way, the Spirit is then there with you and helping and encouraging and strengthening you. And when we go through times of difficulty, it's great to know that alongside our human refreshers, we have the Spirit of God who is resting on us and who is helping us to get through our time of difficulty.

[ 10 : 22 ] So we need refreshment because we all have from time to time problems in our lives. We need refreshers too because we suffer from weariness.

Dale Ralph Davis had a couple of expressions I quite liked to do with this. He says, Most Christians aren't run over, but they're quite often run down.

In other words, we don't have all these big crises sometimes in our lives, but for a lot of us, we just gradually get wearier and wearier. And the other thing he said is, You tend not to get zapped in Christian ministry, but you often get sapped.

So in other words, you don't again have the big thing that knocks you out, but just the regular working, serving the Lord, serving his people, it can lead for us to times of weariness.

You may guess where I'm going now in the scripture. Matthew chapter 11, the Lord Jesus says, Come to me, oh, you are wearied and burdened, and I will give you rest or I will refresh you.

[ 11 : 24 ] The Lord doesn't say, I'm not going to stop you doing any work. The Lord is saying, I'm going to come alongside you, and I'm going to help you take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest, you will find refreshment for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. And when we come across situations where we are wearier, and I guess all of us involved in Christian service from time to time, we experience that weariness.

It's good if we can know the presence of the Lord with us, to reflect on the fact that he has been through a life of total devotion to his Father and to serving others.

And he is willing to come alongside us and to teach us. And when he does that, he will refresh us. He will give us rest for our souls.

So we need refreshers. We need refreshment because we get weary. And then thirdly, I think we need refreshment from time to time because we can get discouraged.

[ 12 : 29 ] One of the greatest things, I think, that brings down people in Christian work is when they've been doing something for a long time and either not really seeing the results that they'd hoped for, or whether something happens that seems to damage or destroy the ministry they've been working on for a long time.

One of the things I particularly realised through being more involved in the work in Pilton and Muir House is how much the normal things that come across Christian workers are there to an even greater extent and can happen an awful lot more quickly.

A few years ago, Bridget and I went to a Scripture Union event. And at that event, the programme had the story of one of the young people from Muir House on the back. And people were really thrilled at what God was doing.

And then just a fairly short time afterwards, this particular young person decided they didn't want to follow Jesus anymore and that they weren't going to live as a Christian.

And you can imagine for those involved in a work like that, you've got someone who seems to be doing really well and then suddenly they've gone back. And you see that quite regularly, I think, in the kind of work that John and Peter and the others are involved in Muir House.

[ 13 : 43 ] And just from time to time, you can just see their heads going down a little bit if there's been a few things on the go and then they revive, they get encouraged again and they pick up.

And for all of us, there is that danger of discouragement. If you're really involved, you're really passionate about a work for the Lord, there is a danger at times you will get quite discouraged in it.

A couple of verses from the Old Testament. I'm slightly shorned in here, but there are ones I wanted to refer to this evening. I think they probably fit in this context. Psalm 23. This is the NIV translation.

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He refreshes my soul. The traditional version, of course, he restores my soul means very much the same thing.

So when we go through times of discouragement, what should we do? We should look to the Lord. We should recognize that he is the one who is able to give us rest and to refresh us.

[ 14 : 40 ] Perhaps we should go away to the quiet place, the quiet waters, where he's able to speak to us and to minister to us and our souls will be refreshed. And a few sounds back from that, Psalm 19.

Psalm 19, which talks to us about the wonders of creation and then talks to us about the greatness of the law. And Psalm 19, verse 7 says, The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.

So if we're discouraged, if we're finally going hard, what do we do? Get our Bibles out. Look for what God has to say to us and he from his word will encourage and will strengthen and will revive us.

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. Okay, so that by kind of way of a quite long introduction.

Let's look now at some examples of refreshers from the New Testament, and particularly these two men. It's Philemon actually rather than Onesimus is the one Paul talks about refreshing others and then Onesiphorus.

[ 15 : 47 ] What are the characteristics that people might have if we call them refreshing? Now I think most of us will have a few of these, probably not all of them, so it's not by any means you have to have all of these to be able to refresh anybody, but they're the kind of things that might be a characteristic of those who refresh others.

So I'm suggesting first of all that refreshers love people. First verse we read from Philemon, Your love has given me great joy and encouragement because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.

And Paul very much emphasizes Philemon's love for the people of God in this short book. So I suggest refreshers love people. Now, as Christians, all of us should love people.

We love God, we love our brothers and sisters, we love those who don't yet know the Lord Jesus, our neighbours in the world round about us. But some of us are better at expressing our love through service, and others are better at expressing their love through interacting with others.

Some of us are kind of, by nature, backroom people, others are much better at talking to people, at encouraging, at refreshing them. One of the things that kind of excises the minds of the elders quite a lot, we had a discussion with John and Rachel about it just last week, is how we welcome and integrate people into the church.

[ 17 : 07 ] And one of the things that really concerns us is if people come into the church and they sit through the service and go out again, and they don't really have anyone talking to them or interacting with them. Now for some of us, that is quite a difficult thing to do, to interact.

We have to really kind of force ourselves to go up and talk to strangers. Other people are really good at it, and I'm not saying it's easy for them, but it seems to come a lot more straightforwardly to them.

They have that gift that they can interact well with people. I'm blessed with a wife who's like that, and quite often I'm able to go along when she's talked to someone, and I can kind of get the introduction without having to make the first approach myself.

And that's quite a good thing to do. But some people, I think, are really good at talking to those whom they don't know. And some of us not so good, but we need to make a bit of effort.

So there's one thing all of us could try to do. But in the particular context of Philemon, the way Philemon showed his love, especially to the people in Colossae, was he had the church, he had his home, in his home.

[ 18 : 08 ] He had the people along, he showed them hospitality. And that ministry of hospitality is something that is really important and is really valuable. And again, from a discussion with Johnny and Rachel on Tuesday, we will be making some suggestions over the next week while about how we as a church could be better perhaps at showing hospitality, particularly to new people when they come.

Now there are lots of people already in this church who are very good at showing hospitality. And again, I'm going to, hopefully not be divisive by sending me out people, but I wanted to mention Ian and Nan, and I wanted to mention Ian and Nan particularly, because when our kids were a little bit younger a few years ago, they made a point of inviting them out separately from us.

So it wasn't, we were invited along and the kids kind of came along with us. Ian and Nan invited our children together, gave them some identity and had something suitable for them that evening. Now lots of others said very good hospitality, I'm sure equally thoughtful in the way you go about it.

But it's a really great ministry and a way to show God's love to others and to refresh them in their Christian life. Refreshers love people.

Second thing I suggest is that refreshers recognize God's work. Refreshers look at something and they can say, I can really see God at work here and I'm rejoicing in it.

[ 19 : 31 ] That's what Paul's relying on with Philemon. Philemon's got this slave, Onesimus, who appears to have run away and perhaps stolen something from Philemon. And Paul is sending Onesimus back and saying, Philemon, he's become a Christian, he's now a brother in the Lord, will you receive him back?

And fairly clearly, Paul is also saying, well not directly, will you receive him back but not as a slave, please? He's now your brother rather than being a slave.

He does it very cleverly. And we read how Paul says that Philemon refreshes the hearts of God's people. A little bit later on, Paul says, Onesimus is my heart.

And then second part we read, Paul says, refresh my heart. So very much directing Philemon to say you receive Onesimus back and you rejoice in what God has done in his life.

And I'm quite sure Philemon did. But it would have been easy for someone in his situation to say, so Onesimus managed to get around Paul. He's pretended to be a Christian. I'm going to have nothing to do with him.

[ 20 : 35 ] And very important that he was able to see that God had worked in Onesimus' life and to be able to receive him as a brother in the Lord Jesus.

There's another example Paul gives of refreshers. Next we read from Romans chapter 15. He says, this is writing to church in Rome, pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord's people there so that I may come to you with joy by God's will and in your company be refreshed.

And actually probably better translated at the end of that, we can be refreshed together. That's the sense of the word that Paul uses. So why are they going to be refreshed when Paul comes to Rome?

Well it is Christian fellowship and enjoying being with one another. But I think particularly it is because of what Paul believes and hopes will have happened in Jerusalem. So there's the one thing about being preserved from those who are against the gospel.

But more significantly here I think that Paul is looking for the favorable reception by God's people. Paul had gone round the churches of the ancient world and he said to them there's a famine in Judea, it would be really good if you could help out financially.

[ 21 : 57 ] And some of them had given spontaneously and generously like the church in Philippi. Others had given perhaps more reluctantly with a bit of a prod like the church in Corinth. But Paul had collected a significant amount that he could take back to Jerusalem.

But there was a real danger that Paul might have got to Jerusalem and the church at Jerusalem would have said this is Gentile money, we can't receive it. We are Jews, they are Gentiles, we are not going to take the money that they have given for us.

And Paul is praying that the Christians in Jerusalem will recognize that God has been at work in the Gentile world, that he has brought many there to know him and to trust in the Lord Jesus and that he has laid on their hearts to share fellowship with their brothers and sisters in Judea.

And if the Christians in Jerusalem recognize that God had been at work in the Gentile church and rejoiced in the fact that they had given them this gift, then Paul would have been really refreshed in his ministry.

And every indication I think that that is what happened with the church in Jerusalem. If the church had refused to accept the money and refused to see God's work in it, then it would have been really discouraging for Paul in what he had done.

[ 23 : 15 ] What does that mean for us? It means that we should look at what people are doing for the Lord and sometimes we'll look at it and say, well, I wouldn't do it that way. That's not the way we've done it in the past or that's not the modern way of doing it, whatever.

Look at what people are doing for the Lord and say, is the Lord in it? And if the Lord is in it, we should rejoice as we recognize God at work.

One of the things I find quite encouraging at Brantzfild, a few times I've heard people say, well, I'm not that happy with some of the things that are being done at the moment. It's not the way I would do it, but God is clearly at work and so as a church we're moving forward and we can rejoice together.

Really important that we recognize God's work and when we see someone doing God's work that we encourage them in it, even if it's not necessarily the way that we would have gone about it ourselves.

So refreshers, recognize God's work. I'm going to move on to look at Onesiphorus now, so we're moving on to 2 Timothy and we have three points from him that I want to think about.

[ 24 : 28 ] And the first one is that refreshers are there when you need them. Paul is in Rome. Paul is in prison in Rome. He's going through, certainly in a physical sense, the lowest period of his life.

He knows that he's coming towards the end. He knows it's very likely that he'll end up being executed and when he's in Rome he finds everyone is not wanting to associate with him.

Those who had been involved in some way in his ministry, he mentions people like Phygelus and Hermogenes and he mentions the whole province of Asia having rejected him. These people, when Paul was going through his most difficult time, they weren't there for him.

They weren't willing to stand with him when it came to the crunch and he was on trial for his life. Onesiphorus comes along and he's not ashamed of Paul's chains.

He recognizes the work that Paul has done that has been of the Lord and he recognizes the benefit he's had, no doubt, from Paul in his own life and he's determined that he's going to spend time with Paul and to help him during his time in prison.

[ 25 : 43 ] So important, isn't it, that when people are going through times of difficulty, that we're there standing with them. Think of a few Christians who have gone through quite difficult periods in their lives and quite often they look back, I'm not saying this is a good thing too, but it does happen, quite often they look back and they'll think this person and that person, they supported me and they were there for me, but actually these people when I was going through times of difficulty they were nowhere to be seen, they were no help at all.

And sometimes the people who were the most help were people you wouldn't have expected and the ones who weren't very helpful were people who you might have expected to be more involved in helping them.

Very important if we are Christians that we stand together in the Lord Jesus. We're not just fair weather friends, happy to associate with others when it's an easy thing to do, when it's very pleasant to do it, but not around when people really need us.

Onesiphorus, the refresher, he was there when Paul really needed him. Second point about Onesiphorus is that refreshers go the extra mile.

Refreshers are willing to go above and beyond what might be expected of them. Onesiphorus comes to Rome and he can't find Paul very easily. Not very clear why he couldn't find Paul very easily but it was a bit difficult to find him.

[ 27 : 11 ] And you can imagine a lot of people that have spent a little time asking around and perhaps searching for Paul and when they couldn't find him they've said, well, I've made my effort, I've done my best, I'll go on now and I could tell people he just wasn't available to find.

Onesiphorus doesn't like that. He goes around, I don't know if he says to people, where's the prisoner, have you seen Paul, whatever, and he goes around and with great difficulty he eventually finds Paul.

And when he finds Paul, he just doesn't make a token visit and go once and try to encourage him and then go away and go about his business after that. Rather, Paul says, he often refreshed me, he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

here was a man who was really willing to put himself out for Paul to go the extra mile to serve the servant of the Lord.

And important for us too to be like that. Extra mile is a great phrase, of course, it's from the Lord Jesus himself encouraging people if they're forced by a Roman soldier to carry a burden for one mile to go the second mile.

[ 28 : 19 ] I can just imagine the Roman soldier used to people cursing and being very reluctant to go even the first mile and if someone then volunteers and says, actually, I'll take you home, I'll go the second mile with you, what a refreshing thing that must have been for them in their work as a Roman soldier thinking it was not so bad after all with these people in Judea.



And very good important for us that we are willing to go the extra mile in serving God. Embarrassment time again, example here, lots of examples of the church but I'm going to pick out Pete and Terry.

Pete and Terry involved in loads of things in the church. If anything comes up that we ask for volunteers, almost always they're among the first to volunteer for it and even when they're not asked then they see things that need done and they just do them.

And it's great to have people like that and there are others in Brunsfield, great to have people like that who don't say, well I will do this and this and then I think I've done my share for the church. I've done my duty, I've done as much as most people and that's it.

We need people who are willing to go the extra mile and to serve selflessly and with real servant hearts for the Lord Jesus in the church and that is what really encourages the leadership of churches or any kind of Christian work when we see people growing in their faith and willing to serve others rather than look for their own comfort.

[ 29 : 41 ] Let's be people who go that extra mile. And then the final point about Onesiphorus refreshers leave you feeling better.

Now it would have been possible for Onesiphorus to go around Rome to do all his searching for Paul to go and visit him fairly regularly and when he got to see Paul he could have said something like this well it's been really hard finding you Paul.

I've spent hours wandering these dusty hot streets being quite dangerous talking to people about you because they might not like me associating with you and I found it really hard coming here.

And the church in Ephesus were really not doing very well. Timothy's got a bit too big for his boots. He's just a young man but he thinks he can tell us what to do and he says he does it with your authority but no one really believes that.

We've got people coming in, false teaching, all sorts of things going on. It's really quite discouraging. And there are people like that in Christian circles and churches. There are people when you talk to them they're always complaining.

[ 30 : 44 ] They're always unhappy with their lot. They're always complaining about other people about leadership or other people in the church and that seems to be the way they almost live their Christian lives.

And you almost go away feeling really weary from talking to them rather than feeling encouraged. Really good if as Christians when we get together we can be encouragers, refreshers of one another.

Now I don't know what Onesiphorus said to Paul but I would imagine that when he came to Paul he would take an interest in Paul's situation what were his needs was there anything he could do to help with them.

They talk I'm sure about the Lord Jesus and about the suffering of the Lord and how our suffering however bad it seems there's nothing compared with that and all that he was willing to do for us. Perhaps they look forward to heaven knowing that Paul's life was nearly at an end and looking forward to the joy it would be to be received and to receive the crown of righteousness that was in store for him.

I don't know that kind of thing. Showing an interest in Paul and talking with him about the Lord and about spiritual things and that is the way that we should be with one another if we really want to refresh each other in our Christian work.

[ 31 : 54 ] Not complaining not grumbling and not depressing one another but rather trying to encourage and strengthen one another in our Christian faith.

Lots of examples of that too I'm going to pick on Graham. Graham's actually gone out with the young people this evening. Graham I've lost quite a number of times people have come to me and they've said something like that Graham he's a really nice young man.

Now it's usually ladies of a certain vintage who said that and I think it doesn't sound a very spiritual comment to begin with but I think actually it is because what they've noticed is that Graham makes time for them even if he's running around busy this morning and he takes a couple of minutes just to speak and ask how they are that he's interested in them and he's got something spiritual to help them with.

Now again lots of other people I could have chosen but really good if we can be these kinds of people who take an interest in others and when we go away they say that was really good it was good to talk about the Lord and to be able to share my thoughts and my issues with somebody else I feel a lot better from that conversation.

Refreshers leave you feeling better. Some unlikely refreshers refreshers the church in Corinth the church in Corinth was Paul's problem child you read the two epistles to the Corinthians and you think what a terrible church there are so many problems one after the other there's immorality there's snobbishness there's all sorts of things going on that you think this is a church that is really going through difficult times and Paul must have been really depressed about it and Paul writes his first letter he then says another letter which isn't kept for us in scripture that was really hard firm letter and then he sends Titus to see them and Titus to go and try to work out where the church is spiritually now it's still not perfect read 2nd Corinthians and there's still loads of problems there but this is what Paul says about Titus' visit in addition to our own encouragement we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you

[ 34 : 01 ] I have posted to him about you and you have not embarrassed me so church with lots of issues and lots of things that we would look at and say that's not very satisfactory and yet actually when Titus went there he could see God is at work these people are growing in their faith and I'm really refreshed and encouraged and everything that Paul said about how good they are it's true despite all the issues it's true they are God's people I am refreshed I am happy because of them again great if people coming among us can come to us and can say I came here I'd heard about the church at Bransfield I heard you got a good welcome I heard there were some fine Christians here I came and it was true I was really refreshed from meeting with God's people and sharing with them refreshers leave you feeling better so five simple points refreshers love people we should be those who take an interest in others and are willing to take when they're visitors or people others don't talk to them we recognize

God's work we rejoice in what God is doing even as not being done the way that we would have done it we're there when people need us we're willing to go that extra mile and we leave people feeling better from having had some interaction with us let me finish with this and this is why I've been to a limited extent this evening naming names this is what Paul writes again to Corinthians 1 Corinthians he says I was glad when Stephanus Fortunatus and Achaïus arrived because they have supplied what was lacking from you for they refresh my spirit and yours also such men deserve recognition now we don't know what these guys have been doing and they've obviously done some good work in Corinth and they visited Paul perhaps and passed on the greetings of the Corinthian Christians and been able to help him in the way that the others hadn't but Paul says people like that who just go about quietly doing Christian work encouraging strengthening others refreshing others in their faith these people deserve recognition

I'm not suggesting we should have a refresher of the month board or anything like that but really good within a church and I've only mentioned a few this evening if there's someone you think some of these things Ian's talked about this evening I really see them in that person go and tell them encourage them and recognize what the Lord is doing in their lives again it's something I will encourage and refresh them and we'll guard against the weariness discouragement and so on that we've talked about we should be good at recognizing our Christian brothers and sisters the work of the spirit and what they are doing in building God's church and in refreshing us in our ministry so more refreshers please is the message to see think about how you can serve others in the church how you can encourage and strengthen them in their faith how you can refresh them when perhaps they're flagging then as a church we'll be really revitalized and we'll have a real joy in serving the Lord and in living for him in our city let's pray together

Father we thank you for your word we thank you for these two men we thought about and I leave them particularly and Onesiphorus we thank you that they were men who refreshed others who were loving who were caring who went the extra mile who were willing to recognize the work that you did who left others feeling better for having met them we pray that you will help us to be like that that we may have a ministry of refreshment in our church that all of us may be able to support and strengthen one another and that through that we may have a real joy in the Lord we recognize that ultimately the work of refreshment is your work it comes to us through the Spirit and it's only by the work of the Spirit changing our lives that we can too become refreshers we pray to you take your word take what is from yourself use it in our hearts and our lives that we live lives that are more honoring to the Lord Jesus and more like the perfect life that he lived we give you our thanks in his name

Amen