

Dont Let Discouragement Take Your Strength

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon encourages believers to resist discouragement by trusting in God's faithfulness and strength.

Duration: 47:14

Scripture: Joshua 1:9, Psalm 27:14, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 34:17-18, Isaiah 40:31, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 1:8-10, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Overcoming Discouragement"

Description

This sermon is a powerful message about overcoming discouragement by trusting in God's faithfulness and purpose, even in the darkest moments. It emphasizes the importance of waiting on the Lord, dealing with sin and disappointment, and rising up in faith to claim the victory God has for us.

Transcript

Don't let discouragement take your strength. How many this morning are fighting discouragement? Let me see your hands. Raise your hands.

Be honest. Be honest. You're fighting discouragement.

And I know in many cases, and there's hundreds of you, discouragement can be debilitating. It can leave you standing still. It can leave you in a place of doubting God.

And ultimately that's what the enemy of your soul would like to happen in your situation. You get so despondent, you begin to doubt the faithfulness of God and even the existence of God. That's how deep it can go.

That's how far. The enemy wants to go right to the core of your trust in God and take it from you. And he's got a weapon.

It's called discouragement. It's worked very well. He hasn't had to refine it all these years.

It works so powerfully. It works so well. I want to talk to you today about discouragement.

Forms of discouragement. How it can come to the most sincere of believers. Now folks, listen to me.

Some of the greatest heroes of the faith, as a matter of fact, most of them in the Bible, suffered seasons of discouragement. Times where the natural understanding has failed them. Opposition so fierce that only the presence of God could make a difference.

Darkness so thick that there's nothing of the natural eye that could see the way through. Sorrow so profound that the natural man couldn't get through it. That means that that part of us that is without God could not make it through to the other side.

Discouragement comes to everyone. Especially those who love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. You will have to fight this battle.

If you're not fighting it today, you will at some point or various points in your life have to go through this. But God sends his word in advance so that we don't go through without understanding. The scripture says in the book of Psalms that we're to sing praises with understanding.

And when this understanding finally gets a hold of the heart, we can lift our hands and glorify God whether or not we're on the mountaintop or we're in the valley of the shadow of death. We can raise our hands because there's a core trust that has come into us. God is faithful.

God is good. God saved me through the blood of his son Jesus Christ. I'm in the hand of the Father.

No man can take me out of that hand. I'm going through everything that life and hell throws my way. I'm going through it.

I'm coming through the other side. David said, I walked through the valley of the shadow of death. And on the other side of that valley, there's a wonderful verse.

He said, surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Father, I thank you God with all my heart.

Lord, did you send your word to vanquish our enemies? You send your word, Lord. That's all that needs to happen. It was your word that came at the beginning of all time and created the heavens and the earth.

It was your word, Lord, that divided light from darkness. It was your word, God. It was your word.

Nothing but your word, Lord, that caused your people to be strengthened above those around them. Lord God, I'm asking you, Lord, that you put the weight of heaven behind your word today. My God, unlock every prison door.

Pour the oil of healing into those that are wounded. They're laying in this journey, oh God, and they're not sure they can ever get up again. My Lord, my God, I'm asking you for the miraculous to happen in this sanctuary.

I'm asking you, God, to break the chains of hell. I'm asking you, God, to destroy the weapons of darkness. I'm asking you, Father, that there be a shadow of glory that is born in the soul, God, not something that comes from our natural effort, God, but it's born of the Spirit of God resident in the center of our very being.

Father, thank you for this, Lord. Thank you, God Almighty. I yield my body as a vessel in your hands today, Lord.

Don't let me be note-bound. I pray, God, expand the borders of my understanding. Give me the very words that you want spoken in this sanctuary this morning.

And, Lord God, we thank you in advance for what you're about to do. We praise you, God, with all of our hearts. I want those who are in despondency this morning to lift your hands and give praise to God this very moment.

Just give praise to God. Hallelujah, hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Hallelujah. We won't leave here like we came in Jesus' name. Praise be to God.

Isaiah chapter 40, please, Old Testament. Isaiah chapter 40. We're going to begin to read it.

Verse 25. Don't let discouragement take your strength. Isaiah chapter 40 and verse 25.

To whom then will you liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that brings out their hosts by number. He calls them all by names, by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power, and not one faileth. Now, here's what it says, essentially, in other translations.

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and behold the stars. And look at the number of them, countless numbers of them. Yet God knows each one of them by name.

He caused them to exist. He causes them to continue to shine. And not one of them is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? With this kind of knowledge, the Lord is saying through the prophet Isaiah, why then do you say that God doesn't see my struggle? Think about these things. And why do you say that God refuses to hear my case? That I'm in a struggle such as, perhaps you might feel, and the enemy wants you to believe, that your struggle is deeper than anything anybody else has ever struggled with. But yet the scripture says, that no temptation taking you is strange.

It's common to all men. And God will not allow you to be tested above that you're able to bear, but with that testing will make a way for you to escape it, that you may be able to bear it. Have you not known, have you not heard, verse 28, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the heavens, of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary.

There's no searching of his understanding. He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increases strength. Even youth shall faint and be weary, and the young man shall utterly fall.

In other words, natural strength. There's a season where natural strength fails every man. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint. Now this context of waiting on the Lord, in the Old Testament, the word wait means to be bound together as if by twisting.

It's like when you take two twist ties, and you interweave them and tie them together. That's the concept. It's you and I saying, God, your ways are higher than my ways.

Your thoughts are higher than my thoughts. Your life is eternal. Your faithfulness is great.

You are altogether other than I am, or feel that I am in this moment. So, God, I yield my life into your hands. And I'm asking you, Lord, to form the thoughts of my heart.

I'm asking you, God, to lead me and direct me in all of my paths as I acknowledge you. It means bind together by twisting, to be gathered together, to be joined, to meet, to expect, to look for something patiently. It means another kind of strength.

It means you and I going into the presence of God and saying, Lord, my strength is not sufficient to get through this. I'm tired, Lord. And I'm tired of trying to get through it.

And I can't get through it in my own strength. I need another kind of strength. You'd be surprised the number of wonderful saints of God in the scriptures that have gone through times of deep, deep discouragement.

Discouragement that could have taken their strength. Think for a moment about Joshua in the Old Testament. He was one of the spies that went in.

He was one who came back with a report the defense of our enemies is gone. We are well able to take this land that God has promised to us. He was among those who had been in bondage.

He was among those who had traveled this journey under the leadership of Moses. He was so ready to go into the promised land only to be sent back into the wilderness for many years because of the unbelief of many around him. But yet having been schooled and trained by Moses his time came when another generation was to cross over that river and go in and claim this land of promise.

It's a type of our salvation I suppose. When we first come to Christ and the promises are so alive and they're so real we are told that our sins are forgiven. We are told that we are new creations in Christ Jesus.

We are told that prison doors have to open, blinded eyes must see, wounded hearts must be healed. We cross that place of identifying with the death of Christ and we walk into this new land. And what before was impossible now becomes possible.

They march around this walled city that cannot be called Jericho, that cannot be taken down by any of the devices of man. They don't have sufficient weaponry to fight against this fortified city. God gives them a word and they begin to march around it in silence which is a type of trusting that the word of God will be fulfilled in its season.

Folks we don't have to figure it out, we just have to hear it and then we act upon it. And the Lord brings His word to pass in His season. And then on the last day they march seven times around the city and then the Lord says now shout through Joshua, shout, the time has come, shout to God.

And they shouted to God and that city came down and what an incredible victory. There are some of you here today that you are in the sanctuary and you gave a momentary shout to the Lord and the Lord has already begun to take apart those walls that the enemy has tried to build around you. He's already beginning to give you a victory that you could never possess in your own strength.

It's something that comes from Him and from Him alone. Then after this initial victory, after this initial place of triumphing over the seemingly impossible, Joshua comes to a place where his armies are overthrown by just a little force that comes against him. And you see this same man Joshua is now on his face.

He's before the Lord and discouragement has come into his heart. He's just begun this journey and the question arises, oh God, oh God, I've seen your power, I know what you can do and now our armies are running before this inferior force that's before us and we've lost our strength. And here, listen to what Joshua says.

I'll just read it to you in Joshua chapter 7 verse 6. He says, Joshua rent his clothes, fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening he and the elders of Israel had put dust on their heads. Now this is a man of faith. He's on his face and the dust of the earth is on top of his head.

His clothes are rent. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, why have you brought all this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? Were it to God, we had been content and dwelt on the other side of Jordan. These are not words of faith.

These are the words of a discouraged man. These are the words of a man who's in the grip of disappointment. He's cast down to the ground.

This is Joshua. This is the mighty man. This is the general of God's army.

Cast to the ground. He says, God, I wish we died on the other side of Jordan. These are not words of faith.

But it's an honest cry. We say, well, God surely could have taken offense at that cry. But he doesn't take offense at an honest cry.

Joshua was willing to go forward. But he was dealing with the reality of the situation he found himself in. And Joshua said, O Lord, what shall I say when we have to turn our backs before our enemies? Now Joshua didn't know that sometimes discouragement comes when something is hidden that God wants to get at.

Something on your journey, on my journey, we have embraced something. We've taken it to our hearts. We've taken it home.

And the Lord knows it's going to take our strength away. And so suddenly we find ourselves unable to proceed until this thing is dealt with. And sometimes that's why discouragement comes.

Discouragement is not necessarily in your life right now because you have failed God, or because you're an evil person, or because God is angry with you. Discouragement can come because God loves you. Whom the Lord loves, the Scripture says, He chastens.

And part of that chastening is He says, Stop. For this season, for this moment, you and I have to reckon together. And the Lord spoke to Joshua.

And He said, Get up off your face. Why are you lying that way on the ground? Israel has sinned and they've transgressed my covenant which I commanded them. They've taken of the accursed thing and have stolen and dissembled also and put it among their own stuff.

Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies. You see, when you and I take to ourselves that which the Lord has forbidden, God in His mercy will stop us and allow discouragement to come into our hearts. When we take a grievance, for example, into our heart, when the Lord says that we're not to do this, we're not to hold grudges against one another, we're not to live with willful bitterness in our heart, but yet on the journey there comes a circumstance into our life and we say, Well, in spite of what God says, I feel justified to do this.

I feel justified to take this thing and we take it home. We hide it under our house. We're still there worshiping God.

We still come to church and lift our hands. We still have the testimony of His life and righteousness, but hidden beneath that tent, hidden beneath this tabernacle, in a secret place, is something that God said you will not touch this thing. You don't take this thing to yourself because if you do, it's going to weaken you before your enemies.

When they had gone into Jericho, the Lord had said, The silver is mine, the gold is mine, the brass is mine. It belongs in the Lord's treasury. Everything else is to be destroyed.

You touch nothing in this particular city. And this man, Achan, felt that he could take this. He coveted gold, silver, and brass.

He took it in a garment and he put it underneath his house and when he did this, it brought weakness into the entire camp of Israel. And folks, when you and I embrace something, even if we're very sincere in the embrace, think of David for a moment. He wanted to take the ark of God back into Jerusalem.

What a great idea this was. How pleased God must be with this procession. So he gets a cart and he puts the ark on a cart.

He gets the singers together and the scripture says they played with all their might and danced with all their might. And David must have been thinking how pleased God must be with this whole religious procession. And yet right smack in the middle of it, God reaches down when a presumptuous young man touched the ark and felt like he had to somehow support God and killed him right on the spot.

Took his life. And David, the scripture says, was so displeased that he was angry that day and went home and said, how shall I bring the presence of God to me? Can you imagine how discouraged he must have been? Can you imagine how discouragement must have been a very real part of his life at that moment? Discouragement comes when we take that which belongs to the Lord and put it among our own stuff. Think about this for a moment.

In Isaiah chapter 3 and verse 14, the Lord had a controversy with his people and he said, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. In other words, that which the Lord gave you to bring relief to the struggling, you've taken it home where it still remains hidden today. How many people today are in the house of God? You have within you the good news of sins forgiven, hope available.

You have the treasure of a new mind, a new heart, a new spirit. You have been given miraculous giftings of the Holy Ghost. You have compassion that wasn't yours before.

You have vision you didn't have. You have words of faith that were never part of your life. All these things have been given to you but you've taken them home and you've hidden them in your house.

You've taken this light of God and you've put it under a bushel. And the question comes, have you done right with the spoils of Calvary? When Christ died, He gave gifts to men. The scripture says He took captivity captive and gave giftings unto men.

When you and I came to Christ, He gave us giftings we didn't have before. I remember this struggle I had when I first came to Christ. See, I went to law school.

I have an undergraduate law degree. And it was my father's desire that I be a lawyer. But I couldn't do it because of the fear that was in my life.

You know my story. I mean, to stand in a courtroom and make a presentation, I would collapse. And I knew that I could proceed no farther.

And then, not too long after graduating from that first degree, I got saved. And the Holy Spirit came into my life and I was delivered from fear. And now, the possibility was there that I could actually pursue what was in my heart to pursue.

I could have taken the spoils of God as it is. He gave me the ability to speak. I was no longer afraid of people.

I could stand up and seemingly the words were there. Now, it started as, just as Warren Carr shared today, it started as just a leaping into the arms of God and trusting Him, but God never failed me. He was always there.

And suddenly, it became possible for me to pursue my dream again. And what a battle, because on one hand, I felt God calling me to preach the Gospel. And on the other hand, everything that everyone else at least expected that I should be was now within my grasp.

And I remember this terrible battle that went on in my soul for quite some time. On one hand, being called to preach the Gospel, sensing that this is where the Lord wanted to take me, that I was being called to share what God had done in my life and bring this newness of life to others. And on the other hand, I could take this treasure of Calvary and now take it home and use it for myself.

And I had all the reasonings in my mind, you know, folks, how it goes, what a good lawyer I'd make, and how honest I'd be, and how I could, you know, help people on the side. And I'm not saying anything against that. If God's called you to do those things, then bless His name.

But, folks, we can take this treasure of Christ and we can take it home and we can unrighteously deal with the spoils of Calvary. When Joshua, when this was finally revealed to Joshua that this man had hidden something under his tent that was taking away the strength of the camp of Israel, he took him into this valley of Achor, and the Scripture says all of Israel stoned that family with stones because it wasn't just Achan. I believe his family was involved in this as well because there's no evidence they made any effort to stop him in this pursuit.

And it's the type of Joshua saying, or you and I saying, away with this wicked heart. Away with this part of me that would use the spoils of Christ's victory only for my own gain. Away with this.

Away with this thinking that coming to Christ is just about me, that coming to Christ is about how I can gain advantage in society, how I can be more wealthy, how I can be more powerful, how I can have a greater

destiny, about how I... Away with this thinking. This is that type of thinking that goes into the place of victory and takes what belongs to God and takes it home and uses it for itself. I thank God this morning that we have a testimony of a young man who had the courage to say, Lord, in spite of the fact that he had a good job, in spite of the fact there was a steady paycheck, in spite of the fact that everything seemed secure, he had the courage to say, Lord, what would you have me to do? Is there somewhere else you want to lead me? Is there something else for my life? Folks, we're not called to use the life of Christ for ourselves.

And there's such a focus on this in so much of our theology in our generation. And I do believe it's brought the church into a place of incredible weakness where we don't stand as we should before our enemies. But I tell you, the day that I'm willing to say and you're willing to say, God, what you've given me in Christ, what you've planted in me through the Holy Spirit, the giftings of God that you've given to me.

Oh, God, take these things, Lord, and may my life be used for your glory. God, if it only seems small even in my sight, you're well able to multiply it and you can feed thousands with it. You've proven it in Scripture.

Lord, I just bring to you what I do have, God. Use it for your glory. God, no matter where it leads me, no matter what it costs me.

And I want to tell you something, folks. It's not easy. There are a lot of battles if you're going to go on with God.

I don't know if it's ever going to be easy. There are seasons of refreshing. There are seasons where glory just comes into your soul and all you want to do is sing and dance.

But I've been around long enough to know that another valley is coming. Another giant is coming my way. I've been around long enough to know that I'm going to have to fight again.

I've been around long enough to know the dark nights of the soul are coming. The difficult times come to every house. You're not exempt because you know Christ, but I'll tell you one thing.

Those who know Christ, we will get through. We will not be overpowered by what comes our way. The prophet Hosea, God speaking through him about his children.

He said, Then I'll win her back to me again. I'll lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her there. God says, I'm going to lead my people in these last moments of time into a wilderness place.

And in that wilderness place I'm going to speak tenderly to my bride. And I will return her vineyards to her and transform the valley of Achor, which means the valley of trouble. That was the place that Joshua finally dealt with this thing that was in the camp.

I'll transform this valley of trouble into a gateway of hope. She'll give herself to me there as she did long ago when she was young when I freed her from her captivity in Egypt. The Lord says, I'm going to reason with you now.

I'm going to call you into the work of Calvary. Oh folks, some of you are discouraged because God is calling you. He's calling you into the work of Calvary and you've tried to stuff Christ into whatever your pursuit of life happens to be at this moment.

And the Lord says, No, that's not what I have for your life. And that falls far short of the glory that I want to reveal through you. Would you have the courage today to say, God, what would you have me to do? Would you just have the courage to just lay on the ground if you have to when you get home and say, Lord, what are you trying to say to me? My heart is open.

Folks, I'm just like you are. We're all the same. There are times that the only way God's been able to get through to me is put me on my face.

I've not been willing to hear otherwise. There are times that I've had to go into times, seasons of heartache just for God to be able to speak to me. And suddenly in a moment of time, because he is faithful, that one area that he wants to deal with, that one thing that's going to hurt me in the future, he speaks it to my heart.

And you know how you know it's God? Immediately your strength comes back. Immediately your eyes are open. Immediately your strength is renewed.

The scripture says, Like the eagles. You've been down as it is, unable to rise above the circumstance. And then suddenly the strength of God comes and lifts you out of it.

I want you to think about King David for a moment. How discouragement came to him when he had to face the consequence of having sinned against what he knew to be right. Sometimes discouragement comes because of sin.

Now David had repented of his sin and he was forgiven and he knew it. But there are consequences to sin. When you and I ask God for forgiveness, let's put it this way.

You might have shot somebody and you ask God to forgive you and he does. But the state will still punish you and you will still go to jail and you will still do your time for the crime that you've committed. There are consequences to sin even though there is forgiveness for sin.

You go out and commit adultery, you're bringing pain into your house. You're bringing bruises into relationships. You're bringing heartache sometimes into your family for years to come down the road.

You're bringing destruction. There are consequences even though God will forgive your sin. And David sinned grievously against God.

He committed adultery with another man's wife and then arranged for that man's murder so he could have that woman to himself. And from that initial union there was a child born. And God, the scripture says, smote that child or put a disease on that child.

And that child was sick for seven days. And the scripture says David went to his face before God. Now you can just imagine what must have been in his heart.

Oh God, it's my sin that brought this into my house. God, it's my fault. Lay this sin against me and not against this innocent child that had nothing to do with this.

You can see Satan right there at his side saying, Give up. You've grieved God and there's no hope for you in the future. It's all over for you, David.

What God had destined for your life to be is finished. And there must have been a spiritual struggle in that man's mind in this time of distress and discouragement. He laid for many hours prostrate on the ground before God and Satan would have wanted to forever take his strength.

Now scripture doesn't tell us exactly what happened between him and God. Only that after the child died, he was unable to leave the past behind. He took nourishment.

He put off the garments of mourning and brought comfort to his house. And God blessed him with new life and gave him a wonderful new son that God himself loved whose name was Solomon. The Lord will forgive sin.

There are consequences to sin. And you and I must not be deceived in thinking that we can sin and somehow the wages of death will not become ours. There are consequences to sin.

But when you and I go to God, he is faithful to forgive all of our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, the scripture says. And God gave David the power to rise up. And God will give you the power to rise up.

You might be suffering from the consequence of sin, but don't let the devil rub your face in it forever. There's forgiveness, David was able to say, Out of the depths I cried unto thee, O Lord. If thou, Lord, marked iniquities, who could stand? But there's forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.

And with the Lord is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. Thanks be to God. No matter how difficult it may be today, no matter what you've done, you can still get up.

You can still put off the garments of mourning. You can still put on the garments of praise. You can still take nourishment from the word of God.

You can still go in and comfort your house. And God says, I will bring life and blessing into your life for the days ahead. Discouragement can come when we fail to realize that there's a divine purpose even in the darkest moments of our lives.

I want to say that again. Discouragement can come when we fail to realize that there is a divine purpose even when we're going through the darkest moments of our lives. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1, we were pressed out of measure above strength insomuch that we despaired even of life.

Paul's saying it was so tough. We faced such violent opposition. It was so hard, this journey, in this particular leg of our journey, that we despaired of life.

That sounds a lot like discouragement to me. It sounds a lot, you know, one of the most erroneous teachings alive in the body of Christ today is that when you come to Jesus, all your troubles are gone. That everything is just going to be glory and roses from here till the time we get to heaven.

No, you've never even known there's a hell until you come to Christ. One of the things that has kept me, a pastor came to me when I was a young Christian. I'll never forget his words.

He said, Carter, he said, when things come into your life that you don't understand, he said, number one, remember this, God has allowed it. And he said, number two, if God has allowed it, there is a reason and a purpose to it. And God's intents towards us are for good and not for evil to bring us to a desired end.

I never forgot that. Those words have come back to me time and again when things have been difficult, when my oldest son was burned in a fire, when my house burned to the ground, when I was sick and having to breathe through an oxygen tank in the mornings, when pain was a very much, very present part of my everyday life, when I went into my office for almost three years running and I would weep every day over the state of my children and my own house and what I felt God was promising me for the future. These things could have overwhelmed me, except for the thought that God, even in the darkest of times, there's a sovereign and a divine purpose.

Oh God, I will not accuse you of being unfaithful to me. I will not doubt your faithfulness to me, oh God. God has enabled me over the years to raise my hands in some pretty difficult situations and to say, Lord, I don't understand it.

But I thank you, Lord, I don't have to understand it. You don't have to reveal it to me. You're under no obligation to tell me why.

This has come into my life. But oh God, I trust that you are working out something in me that is going to come out for good on the other side. Praise God.

If I've had to go through, I've not suffered as much as others. I've suffered more than some and not as much as others. But the suffering that I have endured over the years, if it's all been just for this morning, if it's all been just to be able to tell you that God is faithful, if it's all been just to be able to tell you you will not be swallowed by the flood, you will not be burnt by the fire, you will not be overpowered by your enemies, you will not be boxed in by the walls of darkness.

You will go through in the power of God. You will make it through to the other side. You will have a song in your heart to glorify God.

Then it's been worth it, folks. It's been worth it. It's been worth it.

The Lord told me one time, He said, if you want to form a weapon, you don't pour molten lead into a hammock. You don't pour it into a place of laziness. You don't pour it into a place where there's no trouble, no trial.

No, you want to make a weapon, you put it on an anvil and you hammer the thing until it's sharp and it can be used in the hand of God. No, sir. No, sir.

No, sir. We will not be stopped as the church of Jesus Christ. We will not fall under the lies of the enemy that there is no purpose to suffering.

There is no purpose to the things that we have to go through. Think if the Apostle Paul had fallen to discouragement. If the Apostle Paul had not learned the lessons in Asia, then when he was in the belly of that ship in the midst of the storm, where slaves are dying all around him, where conditions are deplorable, where he's being governed and guided by the ignorance of men who won't listen to the voice of God, it would be so easy for any man, a normal man, to become discouraged, to hang his head in despondency and just whisper death.

No, but Paul waited on the Lord. And he said, God, intertwine your life with mine. Show me the reasons for these things.

And in the bowels of hell, Paul began to pray. And the Lord said, Paul, I have a purpose for your life. I'm taking you to Rome.

You're going to stand before Caesar. You're going to testify of my glory. And I've given you everybody on this ship that is sailing with you, Paul.

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall walk and not be weary.

They shall run and not faint. And in the midst of that storm, Paul, a type of you and I in our generation, stands on the deck of a perishing ship all around him. And the glory of the Lord is in his soul.

He's standing where normal men can't stand. He's speaking things that ordinary men can't speak. He has vision that ordinary men can't see.

Praise be to God. He's standing as an eagle in the midst of a storm, soaring above it in spite of the waves, in spite of the destruction. He's standing, and the glory of God is in his soul.

I want to suggest to you, you don't learn that in Bible 101. I want to suggest you learn it in the belly of a sinking ship. When you and I decide, I'm going to believe God, I know there's a purpose to this.

Hallelujah. God looks down and says, Now there's a man I can use to write half of the New Testament. I can speak to that man, because he's entered into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.

And he's not using the Christian life to somehow get through this world in ease. Lastly, discouragement can come when we have to deal with the disappointment we suffer because of the failure of others. I know there are people here today that are discouraged, and you say, Pastor, well, it's got nothing to do with me.

I trusted God one time, and I went to a church, and I believed everything that was preached, only to find out that it wasn't quite the way it was being presented. Maybe there was a failure on somebody's part, and it discouraged you. And you said, well, if God can't keep that person, how is he ever going to keep me? And many, many have become discouraged in the body of Christ because of the failures of others.

They've gotten close, and they've seen the weakness. Or sometimes the weakness has just been evident. Caleb is sent into the promised land, and he comes back, and he's a young man.

He's 40. He's strong. He's at the peak, actually, of a man's strength, and he comes out, and he says, we can do it.

God is with us. Yeah, the giants are there, he said, but their defenses are gone. He said, they're bred for us.

He said, let's go in and take it. But there were ten of his friends that went in with he and Joshua, and they came back, and they said, no, no, the giants are big, and we look like grasshoppers in their sight, and we don't think we can do it. And they took away the courage of the people's hearts, and the people wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb.

And can you imagine the despondency in his heart as God turns his own people away from the promised land, and for 40 years, 40 plus years, they're turned back into the wilderness, and Caleb has to go with them. And he has to listen to the words of unbelief, the grievances against God, the reasons why they

didn't do what they didn't do. And how many funerals do you think that man had to attend? Funerals because of unbelief.

A million? How many graves he saw? How many people he saw buried? How many of these situations he had to walk through? How he could have become bitter? How he could have blamed somebody for his condition? How he could have become angry? How he could have shaken his fist at the people? How he could have embraced something that isn't like God? Forty years walking through a wilderness, and it's not his fault. It's somebody else's failure. That's sometimes the hardest disappointment to deal with, when you have been abused by an authority figure, let down by somebody you trusted.

Brought into a place of wilderness because of somebody else's unwillingness to believe God for their own victory. Think of Caleb in this wilderness and how bitter he could have become. But finally, under Joshua's friend, they came to the shores of the promised land again.

After 45 years, actually, it says, at this time. And here's what Caleb says, he said, I was 40 years old when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me to spy out Kadesh Barnea, and I brought him word as it was in my heart. Nevertheless, my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance and thy children's forever, because you've wholly followed the Lord your God. And now, he said, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as he said, these 40 and 5 years, even since the Lord spake this word to Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness. And, lo, I am now this day 85 years old, and yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me.

As my strength was then, even so is my strength now. Of course, he wasn't talking about natural strength. He was a man who was spiritually strong.

He knew God would give the victory. And he said, so I'm just as strong now as I was then. I can go out, I can go to war, both to go out and to come in.

Now, therefore, give me this mountain. Now, this was the mountain of the giants. This is where the people went in and said, we can't take this place.

And Caleb says, I've been waiting 45 years for this battle. 45 years to get at these giants. 45 years to go into this land and give my children an inheritance.

Praise God. Hallelujah. Now, he said, give me this mountain, wherefore the Lord spoke in that day, for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and the cities were great and fenced.

If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord has said. And the Lord blessed him and gave Caleb, the son of Jephonah, Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron, therefore, became the inheritance of Caleb, the son of Jephonah, the Kenizzite, unto this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary.

They shall walk and not faint. Praise be to God. Caleb could have become bitter, but instead he waited on the Lord, and he gave an inheritance to his children.

He gave his daughter an inheritance. God brought mighty men into his family. The blessing of the Lord started to abound on every side, all around him.

And it doesn't matter, the point is it doesn't matter how long you have to deal with disappointment. If your heart still trusts in God, your time is coming. Your time is coming.

The Lord has not forgotten you. There is still a tremendous battle going on. There are still mountains to be taken.

There are still giants that need to fall. And God is looking for somebody, in spite of the wilderness, in spite of the discouragement, that you've not lost heart. You've not lost confidence in him.

He's willing to put his spirit upon you. And you're finally a warrior, a weapon in the hand of Almighty God. It's finally not about you anymore.

It's about God now. It's about your future. It's about others.

It's about your family. No matter what kind of a mess you've had to go through, God will bless your home. God will bless your family.

God will bless your children. Even if you're no longer under your roof, the Lord is going to bless them. The Lord is going to cause his life to go throughout your heritage and throughout your house.

You can set your heart on it. You can set your watch by it. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings as eagles. Praise God. For those that are discouraged today, you don't have to live there.

Let God speak to your heart. Let faith arise in your heart again. There is a reason, there is a purpose, there is a season.

We all have to pass through it, but thanks be to God we do pass through it. Thanks be to God his ways are made known to us and through us. Thanks be to God we will live on the victory side.

Praise God, praise God, praise God. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Thank you Jesus. Thank you Father. I pray God Almighty break the bands of hell, break the lies of the devil.

God break the despondency that's in so many hearts this morning. The discouragement, the lies of the enemy. Stamp them into the ground where they belong.

Give us the power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the powers of the enemy. Help us God to cast down imaginations, everything that has exalted itself against the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God give us spiritual authority again that we can rise up O God.

Put the faith of Caleb in our hearts. Give us the courage of David to rise again. God Almighty speak to us like you spoke to Joshua.

O Jesus, the Son of God, let your glory come into your house and into your people's hearts again. Cause us to be warriors in your kingdom and for your cause O God. Help us God to give all back to you that you've given into our lives O Lord, that you might be glorified through us Father.

We thank you for it O God. We thank you. We praise you.

We bless you in the mighty and holy name of Jesus, the Son of God. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. You want to give an altar call today here in the main sanctuary and in the annex for those that have been battling with strong discouragement.

And today is the day you say Lord, I trust you. If you have to speak to me, my heart's open. If I'm dealing with the consequences of willful sin, Lord you'll forgive me and you'll help me now to be a blessing to my home, a comfort to my friends and my family.

And Lord you'll bring new life, life that you love, life that comes from your hand God. I trust you for this. If you're despondent because of the failures of your own heart or others around you, there is a time to get up.

There is a time to say Lord, let your life be intertwined with mine now. Give me the strength that I lack. Give me the vision that I don't have.

Give me faith God that so wants to just fall through my hands. O God, help me to see as Paul did. Help me God to see your plan in the midst of this dark time.

Hallelujah. In Jesus name. If that's you as we stand together in the annex, you can stand between the screens in the sanctuary.

Would you come just let the Holy Spirit touch you today. Let God encourage you to step out wherever you are. The Lord will encourage you just as we worship.

Make your way please. Everything that you've heard this morning leads to one conclusion. God is faithful and you will not be triumphed over.

As a matter of fact, the devil's greatest fear might be realized through your life because he had a whole bunch of discouraged people who went one time into a cave and he knows that he remembers it. And in that cave there was a king who just chose to praise God, trust God in the midst of affliction and darkness and he was being pursued. This is David before he was king and he just wrote a lot of psalms and just chose to trust God.

And it became contagious. And suddenly these discouraged men and women said, hey, if God can do that for him, he can do that for me. And if God can hold him in this darkness, he can hold me in my discouragement.

And if God can fight through him, God can fight through me. And just like hornets out of a beehive when it's been hit by somebody who doesn't belong there, they started coming out of that cave. And scripture says they fought giants and they took on lions and pits on snowy days and they took grounds of acres of land from the enemy.

They were mighty men of God, went in distress and came out mighty. Don't let the devil ever convince you that it's over. It's never over.

It's never over with God. Never. Now, for those of you who like to pray a prayer when we come to the altar, pray this with me.

Lord Jesus. Thank you. Amen.

Bless God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Glory! Glory! Glory! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/KIK-vTXoaAI.mp4>

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