

Discouragement (Letting the Fire Go Out)

by Denny Kenaston

Discouragement is a heart matter that can be overcome by watching over our heart, standing guard over our heart, and dealing with disobedience.

Duration: 1:07:41

Scripture: Genesis 3:5, Deuteronomy 1:39, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 12:1-3, Hebrews 12:12-13

Topics: "Discouragement"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of discouragement and its impact on our faith. He highlights how God warned Joshua not to be discouraged before entering the land, but Joshua and the Israelites still faced discouragement after their victory at Jericho. The preacher emphasizes the power of our words and how they reflect our faith or lack thereof. He warns against murmuring and negative speech, as it can distort our perception of God and hinder His blessings in our lives. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the importance of staying encouraged and trusting in God's promises.

Transcript

Greetings to each one in the worthy name of Jesus Christ this morning. His name is worthy, worthy to be praised, worthy to be lifted up, worthy to be exalted, worthy to be used in every part of the service, sung about, talked about, prayed about, preached about. We greet you in the worthy name of our Lord Jesus.

He is worthy because He was the only one who was worthy to open the seal in the book of Revelation. He is worthy because He is the one who was willing to pay the price and shed His blood for our sins. He is worthy.

He is worthy. Well, this morning, I'd like to bring a message on discouragement or letting the fire go out. I can use the term that was used in the meditation beforehand, letting the fire go out.

But yet, discouragement is very clearly a Bible word. It's something that's mentioned many times in the Bible, so I'd like to use it that way. It's a word we all know very well, discouragement.

In fact, we use it rather freely. I feel dangerously so. We use it so freely, I feel like we almost accept it, the way we use it.

I know that many times I've heard these words come out of someone's mouth. How are you doing today, brother? Well, I've been discouraged the last while. And I think that we need to learn a little more about

what discouragement is, so that we, not that we'll cover it up, but that we'll get rid of it, that we don't have it for days and days and days at a time.

Because it's not the will of God that God's people be discouraged. So I'd like to speak about discouragement this morning. Many are plagued with discouragement.

Many of God's people accept it and live with it, become bed partners with it for weeks and weeks and weeks, and don't get rid of it. Many a Christian growth has been stifled simply because of discouragement. What causes discouragement? We want to try to answer that this morning.

What is it? Is it the devil's fault? If I'm discouraged, can I say it's the devil? If I'm discouraged, can I say it's my fault? How do you get rid of discouragement? These are good questions for us to ponder. Do I need a psychiatrist to help me get rid of discouragement? That's a good question. Christians all over this country go to the psychiatrist when they're discouraged, thinking that if they go to the psychiatrist, he'll be able to help them.

And I believe the very reason why God's people are going to the psychiatrist because of discouragement is because they do not understand what it is. Well, they think it's a mental problem and the psychiatrist can take care of it. But it's not.

Let's read over in Joshua to begin with this morning, Joshua chapter one. We can see in Joshua chapter one that discouragement is much more than just a mental problem. Reading from verse one through nine.

Now, after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses, my servant, is dead. Now, therefore, arise and go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, there have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

From the wilderness of this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittite, and under the great sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swear unto your fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant, commanded thee.

Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper with us wherever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein. For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage. Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee, with us wherever thou goest. Very interesting text, considering this subject of discouragement.

Here we have God appearing to Joshua right after Moses is passed off the scene, and we do recognize that Joshua has quite a task before him, but can we realize also the beautiful promises that God gave to Joshua there that day? He told him, I'm going to give you all the land. Wherever your feet tread, you'll

have that land. No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life, and I'm going to cause everything that you do to prosper.

I'm going to be with you. Go in and possess the land. But at the same time that God gave those beautiful promises to Joshua, three times in a row, He reminded him to not be discouraged.

Be strong and of a good courage. Be courageous in your heart. Don't give in to discouragement, Joshua.

Everywhere where the sole of your feet tread will be yours. Don't give in to discouragement, Joshua. No man will be able to stand before thee all the days of your life.

Don't give in to discouragement, Joshua. I'll cause everything you do to prosper, but don't give in to discouragement, Joshua. It's the message that God gave to Joshua before they went into the land.

He emphasized it three times. Well, it's sad but true. It's sad but true.

And it's sad but true, but also very natural to see what some of Joshua's responses were to the words that God gave. Turning over to chapter 7, and reading from verse 7 to 11, you're going to see and hear the words of a discouraged man. Now, God said, Joshua, don't be discouraged.

But we know the story how they had such a great victory there at the battle of Jericho. And secretly, and unknown to the rest of the children of Israel, Achan went in and took some things out of that city that were cursed by God, and brought a curse on all of Israel. Joshua didn't know it.

I feel he made a mistake. He should have sought God before he just went out and sent a few men out to Ai, but he didn't. I feel that was a mistake.

If he'd have sought God, God would have said, don't go. There's sin in the camp. But instead, he sent, I think it was 3,000 men to Ai, and many of them, or 36 of them were killed, and they came back, and it was a failure, and now we find Joshua and the elders on their face.

Hear the words of Joshua. Chapter 7, verse 7, and Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? Is that what you did, Lord? Did you bring us over this Jordan River so that you could deliver us into the hands of the Amorites and so that we'd be destroyed? Hear his words. Would to God.

We had been content and dwelt on the other side, Jordan, O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it and shall environ us round and cut off our name from the earth. And what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up. Wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Israel has sinned.

Now we see that God instructed Joshua there and showed him the reason why things didn't go right, but what I wanted us to see first of all was that Joshua was discouraged. Right there, he was discouraged. He was not seeking God with a faith-filled heart that said, Okay, something didn't go right and we're going to find out what's wrong.

Something didn't go right, God knows the answer. Let's ask God what happened. No, that was not Joshua's response.

Joshua's response was one of discouragement. He let his heart be filled with dismay. He let his heart be filled with unbelief.

He let his heart be filled with negative thoughts. And oh my, what a different picture he had of God by then. God just let us over here.

We might as well have stayed on the other side of Jordan. We're all going to die out here. Our name's going to be cut off.

My, such a negative discouraged man. Well, we don't want to be too hard on Joshua this morning, do we? Because we all know where we live. Just like we can look here in this biography in the Scriptures and see where Joshua lived, we also know where we live, don't we? And that helps us not to be too hard on Joshua.

But I thought it would be good for us to just look at a clear example of discouragement. In the Word of God. Well, discouragement is a very real problem among God's people.

There was a time in my life when I faced it almost daily. And learned many things through that, which I'd like to share a little bit this morning, maybe to the help of someone else. First of all, we'll look at a couple of definitions.

The definition of the word discourage is to lose courage. When we get discouraged, we lose courage. Which means God's heart and God's will is that we have a heart that is filled with courage about where we're going and about what we're doing and about our God and what God can do.

But a heart, when it gets discouraged, it loses that courage. And then we can see so clearly why God gave Joshua that admonition. Joshua, you have a great task ahead of you.

You have a great big God. You have some big promises that I've given you, but you'll have to be filled with courage in order for it to happen. That's what He told him.

The Greek word for discourage is athumiel. It means to be disheartened, to lose spirit, to be filled with a negative spirit. And we could see that negative spirit in the words of Joshua there, couldn't we? To be filled with a negative spirit.

I think it's good to look at the definition also of courage because we can see what we're not supposed to be by seeing what we're supposed to be. Courage means brave, confident, bold, filled with faith, filled with assurance. So Joshua, I want you to go into the land, and while you go, I want you to be brave.

And I want you to make sure you're confident in me. Not in you, but in me. I want you to be bold.

Don't you be afraid of the enemy. Don't you be afraid of that giant. You be bold, be courageous.

I want you to be filled with faith, Joshua, when you go into the land, so that all the children of Israel can follow you. Be filled with faith. It's very important.

And be filled with the assurance that God will do what He said He would do. The word discouragement is very close to the word anger, which I thought was very interesting. The Greek word for anger is sphume, which means to fume.

Here's some other biblical words that mean the same thing as discouragement. Faint, dismayed. Out of Hebrews 12 it says, hands which hang down, and of course we realize that's only an outward picture of an inward attitude of the heart.

Do the hands of your heart hang down this morning? Hebrews 12 also mentions feeble knees, or knees that can hardly stand. An old man has feeble knees. The old man, when he gets up out of his chair to walk somewhere, he has feeble knees.

They're weak. He's not sure if he's going to be able to stay on them or not. Another expression is a melted heart.

The Bible says that the people who lived in Jericho, their hearts melted when they heard how God, the God of heaven, was blessing the children of Israel. Their hearts melted and that means they got discouraged and they lost courage. So much that they hid in their city.

And another biblical word which means the same thing as discouragement is one found in Corinthians, worldly sorrow. Worldly sorrow. Let's turn now over to Deuteronomy.

Or back to Deuteronomy, I'm sorry. Deuteronomy chapter 1. And we're going to look at a little history lesson in the Bible. Moses is giving the children of Israel a history lesson.

Deuteronomy comes after the book of Numbers. The children of Israel already fainted. They came up to Kadesh Barnea.

They had their opportunity to go into the land and they refused that opportunity for some of these very reasons that we're speaking about this morning. God caused them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years and all those that were 20 years old and upward, all those that were responsible and accountable for their attitudes about God, they all died in the wilderness. And now we have a whole new set of children of Israel who have grown up in those 40 years and Moses gives them a history lesson.

And that's what we'd like to read a little bit here in Deuteronomy chapter 1 and verse 19 and reading. And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all the great and terrible wilderness which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites as the Lord our God commanded us and we came to Kadesh Barnea. And I said unto you, ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites which the Lord our God doth give unto us.

Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee. Go up and possess it as the Lord God of thy fathers has said unto thee. Fear not, neither be discouraged.

Now this is Moses and he's referring back to the time when they came up to Kadesh Barnea and he's telling them what he said to those children of Israel. Go in and possess the land. Only don't be discouraged in your heart.

He told them that. And ye came near unto me, every one of you, and said, We will send men before us and they shall search us out the land and bring us word again by what way we must go up and into what cities we shall come. And the saying pleased me, says Moses, it pleased me well and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe, and they turned and went up into the mountain and came unto the valley of Eshkol and searched it out and they took of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down unto us and brought us word again and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us notwithstanding, ye would

not go up but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God and ye murmured in your tents and said, Because the Lord hated us he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us.

It sounds like what Joshua was saying. I wonder where Joshua learned those words. Whither shall we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our heart saying, The people is greater and taller than we.

The cities are great and walled up to heaven. And moreover we have seen the sons of Anakim. There, then I said unto you, Dread not! Moses is still there deliberating back and forth.

Don't dread, neither be afraid of them. The Lord your God which goes before you, he shall fight for you according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes. And in the wilderness where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bare his son in all the way that he went until he came unto this place.

Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God who went in the way before you to search you out a place to pitch your tents in fire by night to show you by what way ye should go and in a cloud by day. And the Lord heard the voice of your words and was wroth and swear saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land which I swear to give unto your fathers, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh. He shall see it and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon and to his children because he hath wholly followed the Lord.

Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes. Moses still speaking, saying, Thou shalt not go in thither. But Joshua the son of none which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither.

Encourage him for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. Moreover, your little ones which ye said should be a prey and your children which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither and unto them will I give it and they shall possess it. Now here we have quite a reading of Scripture and I realize it's a long portion but it tells a history lesson for us this morning.

We can see very clearly what happened there. We can see very clearly how dangerous it is to be discouraged. We can see very clearly that it's not good for us to go one day discouraged.

Oh my, how God's will gets all distorted when we're discouraged. How it doesn't look plain anymore when we're discouraged. God is not a big God anymore when we're discouraged.

His promises aren't real anymore when we're discouraged. And if we live in discouragement for days and days and days, can we not see how differently our lives will turn out? The children of Israel, they gave in to that discouragement. Well, in time past, I've given over to discouragement in my life.

I had some real hard lessons to learn about discouragement. But I'd like to share just a few of the things that I learned through those hard times that I went through with you this morning about discouragement. First of all, I learned that discouragement is a heart matter.

It's a heart matter. It took me a while to learn that. I'd say it took me six long months of discouragement before it really came clear to me that it was a heart matter.

It's not my brother. It's not my sister. It's not the circumstances.

It's not my boss. It's not what he said. It's not what she did.

No, it's not. Discouragement is a heart matter with me. That was a hard lesson for me to learn.

But it's true. And I learned, and I want to share a little bit of the danger signs of discouragement with you, but I learned that discouragement was a heart problem and that there were certain heart palpitations that you could notice ahead of time before you have a heart attack. And I learned to watch for those palpitations.

And when I see those palpitations coming, it's time to put the red lights on. But it took me a long time to learn that. Until I learned it, the old heart palpitations would come and come and come, and I wouldn't realize what was going on.

And before I knew it, I was in total discouragement. I was in total despair. I was ready to give up.

I was ready to quit. I was ready to throw in the towel. I was ready to go my own way.

I was ready to go out into the world. All those kind of thoughts came rushing through my heart and mind. But I learned to detect those heart palpitations.

Discouragement is a heart problem. It's a heart matter. And the Bible says, keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

And one thing that I learned the hard way was that it is a heart matter. But if you watch over your heart, you won't ever have discouragement. If you'll watch over your heart, if you'll stand guard over your heart, which is exactly what it means there.

Keep thy heart with all diligence. Stand guard over your heart with all diligence. You keep marching guard around that heart of yours, because discouragement is a heart matter.

And if you'll keep that heart and you'll watch over your heart, and you'll realize that's where the whole issue is, then you won't be discouraged. It'll stop you. And we know it's true, don't we, that wrong actions come from wrong hearts.

Something else I learned, sometimes, not always, but sometimes, discouragement is caused by another sin. You see, discouragement is losing courage. Discouragement is losing faith.

Discouragement is losing strength from God. And we all know that by a sin, we lose our strength, we lose our faith, we lose the courage that God gives to us. So I learned the hard way that sometimes discouragement is only in our lives simply because there's some area of disobedience in our life.

There's some area that we are not willing to deal with. There's some area that we're not willing to faith. There's some area we're not willing to yield to God.

And that thing is a controversy between us and God. And God has withdrawn the courage of His Spirit within our heart. And of course, we give in to discouragement.

Encouragement flows continually from the Spirit of the living God. The Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete, the one that comes alongside. The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, the one who's there to comfort us.

The Holy Spirit is called the Strengthener. He's the one who gives faith and quickens faith. It even says that faith is a gift of the Spirit of God.

So we surely have to begin by saying sometimes we fall into discouragement simply because we have allowed a sin to come into our life and immediately the grace is not there and the flow of God's encouragement is not there and nothing else can happen but discouragement. So that's one that you need to take a look at. I also noticed this and learned that discouragement, many times, it follows a pattern of wrong thought.

And here's where I had the big lesson to learn. Thoughts. I thought that my thoughts could be my thoughts.

I thought that I could think what I wanted to think. And I had to learn the hard way that even my thoughts are not my thoughts. I'm not allowed to think what I want to think.

And I learned that discouragement follows a pattern of wrong thoughts. Wrong thoughts? Wrong thoughts. Thoughts about God's unfaithfulness.

Thoughts about God's hardness on me. Thoughts about God's sovereignty over my life. Thoughts about God's chastening in my life.

I learned that I had to be accountable for every one of my thoughts if I was ever going to overcome discouragement. One thought leads to another thought and that thought leads to another thought and that thought leads to another thought and before you know it, you're gone and you've lost courage. Well, I learned that my mind is a battlefield and that there were things that I wouldn't allow myself to think.

Thoughts of failure. Thoughts of God giving up. Thoughts of God's faithfulness not being good to me.

Thoughts of God's sovereignty watching over my life. I learned those kind of thoughts, as soon as they came into my mind, had to be put away. I learned that I must bring every one of my thoughts under the obedience of Christ.

I learned that I could be accountable, yes, for even the thoughts that came into my mind. And it took me about six months to learn that and until then, I really thought that my thoughts, it was okay to have my thoughts. Now, I knew you can't think evil thoughts about a woman.

I knew you had to put those things out of your mind. But I thought it was okay to be me inside my own mind and think my own thoughts about God and what He does and how He handled me and all of that. And I learned the hard way, when you start thinking those kind of thoughts, before you know it, you're going to be discouraged.

If you stay in that discouragement before you know it, you will be depressed. And it happens all the time, doesn't it, brethren? And sisters, it's right here is where it begins. Our mind is a battlefield.

And we'll say more about what gets into the mind a little bit later. So, I'd have to say that one thing that really helped me to overcome discouragement was I faced the matter of personal accountability. I am accountable for what I'm thinking.

This thought is not a right thought and I'm not allowed to think it. If I take the freedom to think this wrong thought about God, about what He's doing to me, about how He's chastening me, about some circumstances that He's brought into my life, it's just going to lead me down, down, down into a discouraged pattern of thinking which will eventually just blow me out spiritually. I learned also,

discouragement is often followed by wrong words.

You can tell a little bit about where you're at in this area of discouragement if you just step outside of yourself once and listen to yourself. What are you saying? How are you talking? How do you verbalize your opinions about life? We see that Joshua, his discouragement was followed by words. We see that the children of Israel, their discouragement was followed by words, wasn't it? In fact, God called it murmuring.

In fact, the Lord was... Anger was kindled in the Lord's heart at the murmuring of the children of Israel. It almost seems like the Lord was being merciful somewhat to them until they went back to their tent and in their tent, they started verbalizing their discouragement. And out of their mouth started spewing all the negative, unfaithful things about God in relation to their life.

Well, I learned you can tell a lot by how you're saying. How's it coming across? How do you talk? How are you when you're free, when you're around people who know you real well? What kind of words come out of the mouth? If they're those negative, unfaithful words, that's a danger sign. If they're faith-filled words, that's a good sign.

The Bible says, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. Well, it stands to reason this morning that if the heart has lost courage, if the heart is dismayed, if the heart is filled with fear, if the heart is filled with a negative approach, then out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. And out of the mouth, here it comes.

I think we need this morning to also recognize the power of our very words. I'm not for anything to do with the positive confession movement, but I do think that what we let come out of this mouth has a lot to do with how it sets the course of our lives. A faith-filled heart will bring forth faith-filled words about God, His sovereignty, my life, what God can do, where He's going, how He's working in my life, what He'll do for you, what He'll do for Him, how to look at a situation that comes our way.

A faith-filled heart will come forth with faith-filled words. But a heart that has lost faith and is discouraged will come forth with those kind of words. I also noticed and learned that we're more prone to discouragement when we're being chastised.

I noticed that. Hebrews 12, if we could just read a couple of verses there real quickly, clearly shows us that we're more prone to being discouraged when God is giving us a spanking. God warns in Hebrews 12, verse 5, "...and ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." Don't be discouraged.

Verse 12, "...wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed." These verses in Hebrews 12, God gives to us to help us and warn us that we not give in to discouragement while we're getting a spanking. And we all have to admit, it is a lot easier to get discouraged when you're getting a spanking. It hurts.

It's painful. Nobody likes to get a spanking. Nobody likes to see what they really are.

Nobody likes the pain. And it's very easy to give in to discouragement at a time like that. But God gives an extra warning and says, My child, don't give in to discouragement while I'm giving you a spanking.

Or that which is lame will not be healed. So, we are more prone to discouragement when we're being chastised. And we shall watch over our heart and keep it with more diligence.

Also, I have learned that young Christians are more prone to discouragement. Young ones. Their sincerity and their desire to do the will of God and to be all that God wants them to be leaves them open, wide open, to get discouraged about what God hasn't done yet for their life.

The very fact that they're sincere, the very fact that they're longing for these things, leaves the door wide open for them to give in to discouragement. And many have fallen, and many have lost a year or two or three years of growth in their Christian life because they gave in to discouragement because of their sincere heart that wanted to do what was right. Young Christians also, and this is a little about the last point, but we should notice it again, they do get more spankings.

Young Christians do get more spankings than older Christians, just like little children do. And because young Christians get more spankings, there's more danger to give in to discouragement in the middle of it. Young Christians often keep their eyes on the giants more than on the God who kills the giants.

It's that way. Young Christians, they walk by sight, not by faith. They go by what they see, not by what God says.

They look at the womb that's dead and they get discouraged in their heart rather than giving glory to God and being strong in faith. They tend to go by what they see. And as they look at the waves that are flowing around them, they get their eyes off of Jesus and off of God and His faithfulness and His promises and all those things.

And they begin to sink in discouragement. It happens many times to young Christians. Let's turn to Acts 14.

We already looked at Paul a little bit this morning, but I just found just a blessed example of a courageous heart in Acts 14. Paul is coming to the end of his first missionary journey. He's been to a few different cities.

He's preached the Gospel. He's seen some blessed results. And now as we break in to Acts 14 and verse 19, Paul is at Lystra, I believe, and he has a little trouble there.

But I'd like us to see the courage or the lack of discouragement that Paul had in this text. And this is for the young ones as an inspiration, but for all of us too. Acts 14 and verse 19, And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, they drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he arose up and came into the city, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the Gospel to that city and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra and to Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed.

What a beautiful example of not being discouraged. I mean, if anybody should have been discouraged, Paul should have been there. I mean, he preached the Gospel and they took stones and they threw

stones at him and took him out of the city and left him there as if he was a dead man.

And what did he do? He didn't even take one day to have the mulligraves. He didn't take one day to have a pity party over the things that happened to him. He went back into that city, preached to the people, went to the next one, prayed at another church, went back to the other cities, and encouraged all the people to go on with the Lord and even told them, by the way, it's through much tribulation that you enter into the kingdom.

And he confirmed the souls and encouraged them to continue in the faith and went back to Antioch to give a report of what great things God had done. Well, you say, but that's the Apostle Paul. No! That's a man made out of the same thing that each one of us is made out of.

But he was a faith-filled man who did not give in to any thoughts of discouragement. Alright, the next one. I learned also that the devil does have his hand in discouragement.

So far, we've kind of been dealing with our own responsibility in it, but we need to also acknowledge that the devil has his hand in discouragement. He is the one who is the accuser of the brethren. He is the one who knows if he can get you discouraged by interjecting wrong thoughts into your mind, he knows what will happen.

He knows very well this pattern. Wrong thoughts? Discouragement. Discouragement? Depression.

Depression? Self-hatred. Self-hatred? Suicide. That's right where he wanted you all along.

Suicide. Yes! Suicide. People who get discouraged end up committing suicide.

Do you believe that? Men who do not deal with lust in their heart end up, oftentimes, committing adultery. But people who do not deal with discouragement in their own hearts can end up committing suicide. And the devil knows it.

He knows it very well. Oh, he's a master at throwing those thoughts in there. God doesn't love you.

Boy, God's hard on you. He's an austere God, isn't He? You fail God again today. How can you be a Christian and do that? Oh, he's a master at it.

Know the words? I learned them. You know where I learned them? By having Him throw them in my face. God doesn't love you.

You don't love God. You don't love God like you should. Oh, he's a master at throwing those words, isn't he? And here's where our accountability comes back in.

When that thought comes, what do we do with it? That's where our accountability is. The Bible says there's no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. We don't have to get into those thoughts.

We have something that we can do to take care of it. But we need to recognize this morning that the devil does have his hand in discouragement. He'll throw those thoughts into our minds.

His purpose? To devour. To get you to give up. To get you to quit.

To get you off by yourself. To get you sitting all alone. To get you clamming up so you won't talk to anybody.

To get you in despair. If he can get you in despair and leave you there long enough and get you by yourself and leave you there long enough, you could put a noose around your neck too and jump off the barn. It happens.

It happens all the time. Praise God, we don't hear about it very much in this area where we live, but if you get into the cities, you hear about it all the time. And it's a pattern.

Wrong thoughts, discouragement, depression, self-hatred, and of course, what's the ultimate end of hating yourself? Blow my brains out. Hang myself. End it all.

It's very real, brothers and sisters. Not something to take lightly. If you could be in the counseling room, you'd know what I'm saying.

It's not a few, but many, many people would give the testimony. I've been tempted with suicide. I've been tempted with thoughts of suicide.

How many times we hear that, Brother Moose? I've been tempted with thoughts of suicide. Yes, the devil does have something to do with it. Turn to Hebrews 3. I've learned that discouragement, the root of discouragement is unbelief.

It's unbelief. We want to read in Hebrews 3.7 to Hebrews 4.2 and what we're reading here is we're reading another account. It's a condensed account, but it's another account of that same historical reading that we had over there in Deuteronomy 1. Now, we're going to read it again, only it's got a whole lot more punch to it as we read it in the New Testament.

A lot more punch to it. Now, we want to remember as we read this that the problem with the children of Israel was unbelief. But God said they got discouraged.

Discouragement and unbelief, they go hand in hand. Hebrews 3.7 and reading, Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, as in the day back there in the book of Numbers, in the day of temptation in the wilderness. Don't harden your heart like they did in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

When your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years, wherefore, I was grieved with that generation and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. They don't know My faithfulness. They don't know My power.

They don't know how great I am. They don't know what a big God I am. They have erred in their heart, and they don't know My ways.

So, I swear in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily, encourage one another every day, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Courageous, confident, faith-filled hearts.

Let's read on. While it is said, today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, for some, when they had heard, did provoke, howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose

carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believe not? Now notice, the verse just before that said it was to those who sinned.

And now this verse says that it was to those who believe not. Now we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them. But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. Now here we can see so clearly what happened to the children of Israel.

And we can see so clearly what can easily happen to us. We hear the Word. We hear about the faithfulness of God.

We hear about it daily. We read it daily in the Bible. We can read about God's faithfulness.

And God speaks to us. And He said as we read, I'm God. I'm a big God.

There's no God like Me. Beside Me there is no God. I'm God.

I can take care of you. Look what I did. And we read about it in the Word.

And God speaks to us and says, I parted the Red Sea. I made all these things. I put the stars up into the sky.

I'm God. And God speaks to our heart. But then we must take that and be accountable for our own thoughts.

Life comes our way. Circumstances come our way. Decisions come our way.

And what do we do with them? If we get discouraged, actually what we're saying is God is not a big God. God cannot meet my need. Oh, we never say those words, but that's really what it is.

We're saying God can't meet my need. My need is greater than others' need. Yes, God did that for you.

But He can't do it for me. And we see the example of the children of Israel and God put it right down where it was. He put it right down home for them and said, they didn't want to.

They didn't want to believe me. They didn't want to trust me. So, the root of discouragement is unbelief.

Well, I learned to flee it like the plague. And brothers and sisters, it is a plague, isn't it? I mean, it's like a cancer. You let it settle in your heart for a day, it will be stronger there the next morning.

Leave it there all day, it will take over more of your heart attitude. Leave it there for another day and it will permeate more of your heart. It's like a cancer.

It is a plague. I learned to flee that thing. I learned to see it when it was just starting.

I learned to sense the heart palpitations in my own heart. Oh, it won't work for me. God doesn't love me.

God doesn't know what He's doing. Those little thoughts, those things. What's God doing? Why hasn't God heard? Why hasn't God delivered me yet? Although I learned, when those little heart palpitations

come into my mind, that's when I put them away.

Because the next one is a little stronger and the next one is a little stronger and before you know it, there's no faith in your heart. No faith. I learned to run away from that and flee to the refuge and strength.

The very present help in time of need. Amen? I learned to run there. Whenever those palpitations started going off in my heart, I learned to run there.

Like David did at Ziklag. Oh, what a blessed story that is. Here's David and his men.

They've been off to battle. They've been out in the wilderness. They've been being chased around.

They've been hiding like dogs in the caves and all those things. And they've been out having battle and they come back to the town of Ziklag where all the wives and all the children are and find that the city is burned and all their children are carried away and all the wives are carried away and all the goods have been spoiled and here they come back there. The Bible says that they wept until they had no more weeping in them.

And then the next response of David's men was discouragement. They got discouraged. What do they do with their discouragement? They blame David.

What do they do with their blaming David? We're going to stone him. We're going to kill him. It's David's fault.

But then in the same text, we see the example of David and what he did. I mean, if anybody could have got discouraged and pulled a Joshua 7, David could have there. He could have said, Lord, You told me I'm going to be the king, Lord.

Now look what happened. He could have done the whole thing. He could have had the biggest pity party there that he wanted.

But he didn't. Instead, there was a faith in his heart and a courage in his heart. And the Bible says he got along with God and encouraged his heart in the Lord.

And you know when he encouraged his heart in the Lord, well, then he got to seeing that thing from God's point of view. And when he saw it from God's point of view, he said, I think I'll ask God what to do about this thing. Lord, shall we go after him? And the Lord said, you pursue and recover it all.

So David stepped out of his fellowship with God and back into the situation with all these men that were ready to stone him and kill him. And he said, hey, I heard from heaven on this situation this morning and I talked to God about it. And God's a big God and He's a mighty God and He told me what to do and we're going after those men and we're going to recover all.

God already told me. And those men shook off their discouragement and they shook off all their negative thoughts and they shook off their thoughts about killing their leader and they jumped on their horses and followed him and they recovered every single thing. What a different response, isn't it? Oh, may the Lord give us wisdom.

No, we don't have a ziklag this morning. There's no city that's burning down before us, but there may be a part of your life that is burning down this morning. There may be something going on in the circumstances

of your life that you don't understand this morning.

There may be a trial you're going through that you can't quite figure out this morning. You don't need to figure it out. You don't have to understand it.

God knows it all. And He's a big God this morning. And He's my God.

And He's a mighty God. And He's powerful. And His arm is not short that it cannot save or meet whatever the circumstances or the troubles that face our lives.

He's a big God, brothers and sisters. And we don't need to be discouraged. We need to be encouraged.

We need to encourage each other today. God is on the throne and He's a mighty God. And He knows whatever your situation is.

He'll lead you through. I guarantee it. He'll take you through.

It will all make sense someday. Don't be discouraged. Be not dismayed.

Don't let your heart melt this morning. Don't wonder about your God. Don't question His ability to save.

He's a mighty God. He can do it. And lastly, and I already said this, but we'll make it a point, to be remembered.

I learned that discouragement is sin. Now, that was a good thing to learn. It's sin.

I guess I thought it was just me. I guess I thought it was just sadness. I guess I thought it was just my negative nature.

I'm not sure how I justified it. But I learned deep down in here that it's sin. And when I learned that it was sin, then I became accountable.

And when I became accountable, I could overcome it. You know, you've heard it. I've heard it.

You've heard it. How have you been, brother? Oh, I've been pretty discouraged lately. Have you? Well, how have you been, brother? Oh, I've been living in adultery the last few days.

We say that one so casually, don't we? Oh, I've been discouraged. No, brother. That very use tells me that we've accepted it, that it's normal, that God's people are that way, and life is filled with discouragement.

But the Bible doesn't teach that. See, the Bible says it's sin. I learned it's not poor me.

It's sin. I learned. It's not my circumstances.

It's sin. It's not what He did. It's not what He said.

It's sin. It's not my upbringing. It's not my father.

It's sin. We accept it too easily as a normal thing in the Christian life. And you know, if we talk about it casually, it's not sin.

It's not sin. Can't be. No.

If we talk about it casually, we've married it. Well, I've been discouraged the last few days. Oh, okay.

Well, Lord bless you, brother. I learned that discouragement is sin. And I came to the place where I said, no more.

No more. I'm not going to let discouragement guide my life. I'm not going to let discouragement ruin my life.

I'm not going to let discouragement sap the strength out of me. I'm not going to let discouragement rob me of growth in my Christian life. I came to the point where I just said, that's it.

No more. Well, if you have a problem with discouragement this morning, there's an answer. You don't have to despair this morning.

But I would encourage you to take the personal accountability approach to dealing with discouragement. You can go to the psychologist and he'll take a totally different approach. But even there, I've heard that the psychologists, after they've tried everything they can to woo and coo you out of your discouragement, even they'll sit you down and say, it's your fault and you need to face it and deal with it.

Even the old psychiatrist will do it eventually. They call it the shock treatment. Well, the wooing didn't work and the cooing didn't work and all the clinical work didn't work, so we're going to give them the shock treatment today.

And they just sit you down and tell you, it's your fault and you're doing it and you're the one that's causing it and you need to face it. That's what they do. So, we don't need to go to the psychologist.

We don't need to deal with ourselves that way. We don't need to be wooed and cooed. We just need to face the personal accountability and say, alright, this is it.

I'm going out. And then I had to think in closing of our Lord Jesus. The Bible uses the very word discouraged when it speaks about our Lord Jesus.

In the book of Isaiah, it says of Him, He shall not be discouraged until He brings judgment on the earth. I thought about our Lord Jesus. He could have got discouraged for sure.

I mean, He had a bunch of disciples that didn't understand Him. They were off key. They were out of tune.

When it was time to be crucified, they were ready to protect Him. They didn't understand at all. He had nowhere to lay His head.

He didn't know where He was going to sleep any times at night. He sometimes had no food to eat. He was misunderstood by almost everybody.

He surely could have got discouraged. But the Bible says, He will not be discouraged until He brings judgment upon the earth. And the Bible says that He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet He did not give in to discouragement.

He was tempted to give it up. He was tempted to question His Father. He was tempted to question the sovereignty of His Father and the meaning of His Father and His life.

He was tempted in all those things, but He never got discouraged. He never did. What an example for us! He never got discouraged.

Well, may the Lord just quicken our hearts here this morning. Help us lift up our eyes. Let us see Him again.

Let us get a clear vision again of what God is doing in our lives. Push the reset button, if we can use the term. Bring ourselves back to zero again.

That's right. Lord, I trust You. I know You love me.

I believe in You. I know You're a mighty God. I know You can deliver me.

I know that You love me. You do that for about 30 minutes this afternoon in your closet at home and you'll be a different person. If you're battling with discouragement, you'll be a different person.

Shall we kneel together in prayer? Father, we come to You in Jesus' name this morning. We thank You for the Word of God. We thank You, Lord.

I want to personally thank You for the lessons that You've taught me. Oh, Father, some of them are very hard, but oh God, they're worth learning. They're worth learning.

I pray, Father, this morning for those that may be discouraged in the room, Lord, I pray that You will encourage them. I pray, God, that You will motivate them to clear their heart and encourage their heart today. Oh, Father, we just thank You for the way that You lead in our lives.

Lord, this morning, we want to accept You, Lord. We want to accept Your workings in our lives. Lord, we want to acknowledge that You do love us.

We know You love us. You're working out Your will in our lives. Father, we want to go the right way.

We want to serve You with all of our heart. We want to see that glorious day. We want to see Your face, Lord, that day when all the sorrows will be erased.

And God, we just pray that You'll encourage our hearts this morning. I pray, Father, where personal accountability needs to be, I pray that You'll apply it. And Lord, where encouragement just needs to be given, I pray that You'll do that also, Lord.

God, You know it's impossible for a man to meet the needs, all the varied needs in a congregation. So I pray, Father, that You by Your Spirit would take the part of the message that the individual brothers and sisters need and apply it to their lives, God. And I pray, will You not raise up a people that are filled with courage, Lord, in these days that we live in.

Father, raise up a people that are filled with courage, I pray in Jesus' name, Amen. Thank you for listening to this message. We trust that it has been a blessing to you.

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