

# Don't Give Up

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala encourages believers to seek daily renewal in Christ to overcome fear and fatigue in their spiritual journey.*

**Duration:** 19:38

**Scripture:** Psalm 23:1-3, Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 11:28, 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Galatians 6:9

**Topics:** "Discouragement"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of not losing heart in the face of struggles and challenges. He refers to the apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:1 and 4:16, where Paul encourages believers to not lose heart. The preacher emphasizes that Paul's vulnerability and honesty about his own struggles can help us in our own battles. He highlights the importance of not giving in to fear and fatigue, as they can hinder our relationship with God and our ability to experience victory. The preacher also emphasizes the need to fix our eyes on the unseen, eternal things of God rather than being consumed by the visible, temporary circumstances around us.

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## Transcript

When you hear someone who's very gifted and special at anything, you listen real close. If Michael Jordan is going to talk about basketball, every ear is going to be wide open. If a notice scientist is going to speak, everybody flocks to hear the guy that won the Nobel Prize for whatever.

When people are very skilled and adept at something, you want to hear what secrets they've learned, what experiences they've had that they bring to us so it'll help us. When it comes to Christianity, God has given us the Apostle Paul, along with others, but especially in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul as a great example of a phenomenal believer. Not just believer, convert, transforming testimony of what Christ did, changing him from a persecutor of the church to an apostle, his ministry, founding churches, enduring all kinds of struggles, put in prison, beat, left for dead, stoned, hated, rejected, loved by others.

Paul was the real deal. And Paul says something that I just stumbled over the other day, and I felt like it was something God wanted me to share with you. When he tells you how human he was, and what he battled with, and how he found the answer to overcome the problem that besets all Christians.

All of us fight the same problems. All of us fight the same battles. And we have struggles that many times we don't verbalize to other people.

But Paul really helps us because he gets rid of the veneer, and he becomes vulnerable, and he tells us, this is the way it is. So in 2 Corinthians, the fourth chapter, we find him in the first verse saying this. Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

Then later on in the 16th verse, therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory.

What we're going through now can't even be compared with what's waiting for us, the reward that God has for all of us. But the trouble is we're going through the mess right now. That far outweighs what all the momentary troubles.

Notice what he calls getting thrown in prison and going through persecution. He calls it light and momentary compared to the eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen.

These eyes can only see what is seen. By definition, my eyes can only see what is seen. So he's talking about something else now.

He says, so we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. In other words, as he gains strength in God, he says, God opens the eyes of my heart and I get my bearings again and I can keep going because instead of just looking at the mess around me, I start seeing the invisible things.

The invisible things of God and heaven and glory. For the things that are visible, they pass away and they're transitory. But oh, when the eyes of my heart are open and I got myself focused on Jesus and the place that he has prepared for me, oh my goodness, changes my life.

But what struck me was this. Therefore, we don't lose heart. He says that twice.

Why would he say that? Because the great temptation is to lose heart. And he says as a testimony, therefore, God's helped me. I don't lose heart.

Well, what does that mean? Lose heart. The Greek word that's used there in both the first verse and the 16th verse is a verse that says, I don't give in to the fear that would paralyze me. And I don't give in to the fatigue that would make me quit.

It has a double meaning. He says, I don't lose heart. Not like his heart could be taken out of his body.

He's not talking about his physical heart. He's saying, I don't lose heart. I don't give in to the fear that would paralyze me.

And I have found a way to keep going and not give in to the fatigue that would make me quit. Not everyone who starts the race finishes the race. That's interesting to me.

That Paul knew what it was to battle with fear and with fatigue. All Christians do. Because the devil paints the situation around us in such atrocious colors that the temptation is to begin to be afraid, anxiety-ridden.

I'm not going to make it out of this. I can't get through this. I can't get through this.

This is the end. I won't make it through this. I made some in the past.

I'm not going to get through this. And then that just grips your soul. He says, no, I haven't given in to that.

And then there's fatigue. Spiritual warfare that we fight is constant assaults of fear trying to get us afraid. And also fatigue where you get tired of fighting the devil.

How many have ever gotten just flat tired of fighting the devil? Fighting problems, believing for children, believing for provision. Just one thing after another. And very soon you find out that you're running out of not this strength, but this strength.

You get in spiritual fatigue. You know, when I was at the Naval Academy a lot of years ago, when they taught hand-to-hand combat, and this is still done, it was done in World War II, it was done in other wars where people still get into hand-to-hand combat, as in some of the Gulf War. That when you attack someone, you scream like a maniac.

Because the scream sometimes, which is like you're crazy, the scream could put an ounce of fear in the person that you have to deal with. Because fear paralyzes you. The minute you get afraid of life, of Satan, of the situation, you lose something from God.

You lose the victory that God wants you to have. And then the other thing which we've all experienced is not just that fear, but that fatigue. Just tired.

Have you ever gotten tired in your Christian walk? Just get tired. And I'm so happy that Paul would say that he faced those battles. He said in one place, in this same letter, all the trouble he'd been through, he put this, sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.

How in the world can you be sorrowful but rejoicing? You can. You can have deep sorrow in your heart, and then underneath somehow you can still be rejoicing in God. That tells us that we have to pray that God will touch people and renew them, so that they don't lose heart.

This is the great battle going on right now in this building, and all throughout America, and in India, and around the world. Satan is attacking Christians so that they might lose heart. Give in to fear, or get tired of keeping on keeping on.

And we've all faced that. How many can honestly say by uplifted hand, you know what I'm talking about. Just attack of fear, or just straight fatigue.

Just tired. Just tired. I've had times of believing God, and trying to minister to people, and be the person God wants me to be.

I'm just telling you brothers and sisters, I just get flat out tired. Not tired physically, I've gotten that too. But tired inside.

Just tired. Tired. Or you feel boxed in, and you don't know how you get out.

And don't say that can't happen. Paul is boasting that praise God, God brought it through that he didn't lose heart. Now, what's the answer? Look at verse 16 again.

Verse 16 Therefore we do not lose heart, though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. So now listen to this. Take this to the bank.

Listen to the word of God for all of us today. No matter who prays for you, you're not going to get the strength to endure for a week. You're only going to get the strength to endure for a day.

I never knew that growing up. I was around a certain kind of preaching that if you had some experience with God, it would carry you for a year. There is no experience.

Paul said he was renewed what? Day by day. We got to stay close to Jesus. Notice the other contrast that's also importantly.

Though outwardly we are wasting away. Now he was talking there about the beatings, the imprisonment, all the stuff he went through, all the stuff in the physical world. He said though outwardly, things aren't looking good all the time.

The way I get through it is that inwardly, I'm renewed day by day by God. The outward situation, brothers and sisters, many times you cannot change the outward situation. God has to change it, and a lot of it takes time.

And when it takes time, that's when fatigue can set in. But Paul said more important that's what's happening on the outside is what's happening on your inside. Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we're being renewed.

What is he talking about? There's a physical body, and there's a physical world, but the real Pastor Brian Petri has nothing to do with his body. The real Pastor Brian Petri is his spirit, his heart. The thing that apprehends God that puts faith in God.

That's where the Holy Spirit dwells within him. And the great battle in life is to keep strong in the inner man. When Paul says in Ephesians 6, Therefore be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

He's talking about inwardly. Andrew Murray, the great devotional writer said, when it comes down to the bottom line, I'm paraphrasing, your whole world is your heart. Has nothing to do with New York City.

Your whole world is your heart. When your heart is strong in God, you can face anything. When your heart is weak and beat down or afraid, a little mosquito can fly by and knock you out.

There's the inward man and the outward man. And all of society emphasizes the outward man. How you look, pumping iron, getting strong, vitamins and all that.

But you can be tonight in such strength in the outward person. But if your inner person is weak, you're not gonna make it. You're gonna lose heart.

You're gonna give in to fear. You're gonna get tired. Because the battles we fight, we're not wrestling against Hulk Hogan.

We're wrestling against principalities and powers. And we need the strength of God to fight against those demons. Come on, do I get an amen here from somebody? Let's say amen to that.

Paul says the all important question is this. You gotta be strong inside, you gotta be renewed in the inner person. I used to have a radio program for a little while, a little short program that I did years ago.

It was called Strength for Today. Because that's all the strength you can get. Is strength for today.

When your mother, and you're growing up, when your mother gives you a meal, she doesn't say, eat your food, this is gonna take you through the next month and a half. No, she said eat your food for today. Brothers and sisters, listen, someone needs to hear this.

All God can do is help you through today. When you wake up tomorrow, if you wake up tomorrow, He'll be there to help you for tomorrow. But He's not giving you for tomorrow what you need today.

You gotta understand that. So, our time with the Lord, our openness to the Lord, opening the inner person to the Lord is all important because that's how we're renewed day by day. Spiritual renewal day by day.

And when we meet God on a daily basis, He gives us the strength we need to fight fatigue. He gives us the courage we need. No, I'm not gonna give in.

No, I'm not afraid of you, Satan. In fact, I resist you in the name of Jesus Christ. But that takes strength.

That takes spiritual strength. Like in the jungle, in the wild, weakness only draws predators. In spiritual warfare, we need to be strong.

We need to be renewed. Well, how do you get renewed, Pastor? You gotta be renewed. Now, tomorrow there's no prayer meeting, so you won't have me to talk to you, but you'll have someone a lot better.

You'll have Jesus to talk to you. This Word helps us to be renewed day by day. It especially renews our mind.

And then when we pray and we worship and we wait, you have to, listen to me, you have to open your heart. Notice inwardly we're being renewed. Some people, when they pray and worship, they only open their mind.

The mind is important, but you need to be inwardly renewed in your heart. You need fresh breezes of the Holy Spirit. You need fresh fountain opened up of the river of living water.

You need some refreshing. Oh, I just thought of a verse. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings as an eagle. They shall run and what? Not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

They're not gonna give in. They that wait upon the Lord. So now what are our lessons? There's inward and there's outward.

And the inward is more important because the outward will one day all perish, but the inward man will never perish. What wins the victory? Not biceps and triceps, but spiritual strength from God in the inner person. All the great Christians have been strong on the inside.

Think of the discouragements his parents faced for 20 years. No breakthrough in India. I remember Danny Matthews telling me, I think it was very meager results for the first 20 years in India.

Anybody else would have quit. But they were being renewed day by day. More important than the food you eat tomorrow.

More important than your vitamins. Take them do whatever you feel you should do. But more important than all of that is to get time with God to be renewed in the inner person.

When I was growing up, I had this concept that going to church on Sunday or Tuesday was like going to gas station. You fill up and then you run for a few days. You can't run.

You need it every day. In fact, I once heard a song that said, I need thee every hour. You have to constantly be saying, Jesus, help me.

Help my strength. I've had some battles lately, for whatever reason, where just the pressure was so intense and I was just battling with some pain inside of me. Such deep pain.

And I said, God, I can't do this. I can't make this. But I love that song.

His love is stronger than my pain. His love is stronger than our tiredness. His love is stronger than our fear.

Whatever your thing is today. You know, you could be here in this meeting and need to be renewed so you can keep going. But how many got the lesson? Whatever happens tonight, that's good.

It'll help you for today. But tomorrow, do we need Him again? I said, do we need Him again tomorrow? We need Him again. Outwardly, we're perishing.

The world is doing up and down yo-yo type tricks. But inwardly, that's where the answer is. Inwardly, by God's grace, we're being renewed.

If you're here tonight and you say, Pastor, that word was for me. It's for all of us. It's for me.

Pastor, I need to be renewed today. I want to open my inner person. I'm not giving in to fear and I'm not going to get so tired I'm going to quit.

I want Satan to know you're a liar, Satan. I'm going to keep running. I'm going to keep serving and I'm going to be bold and strong and courageous.

And God, you're going to help me to do it by renewing me day by day. Rivers of living water. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

You don't even have to pray and say things. You can just sing. But anyone who wants to just acknowledge that, come out of your seat, balcony or downstairs.

One of you, a hundred of you, what does it matter? Anyone who says, Pastor, I want God right before I leave this building to renew my strength because it's been hard lately. It's been hard lately. You've had some battles, Pastor.

I'm facing some battles. You just come. God's going to help you.

Remember, all help begins by confession of need. All help begins by confessing your need. Thank you for renewing our strength, Lord.

Thank you for renewing our inward person. But Lord, give us wisdom in the inner person that when tomorrow comes we don't try to live off of Tuesday's renewal. For day by day the Apostle said, my inward man is renewed.

Give me the grace I need when I wake up tomorrow morning. Help me to be renewed. Help me to take time to focus on you.

Get your word in my heart. Help me not to live on stale food, Lord. We love you today.

We love you. Can we all just open our mouths and tell them, we love you, Lord. Come on, everybody, just tell them, I love you, Lord.

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