

Hindrances

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being sensitive to the Spirit of God and recognizing Satan's hindrances in our lives, in order to overcome them and fulfill God's call on our lives.

Duration: 29:32

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 20:27, Ephesians 2:4, 1 Thessalonians 2:18, 2 Timothy 4:7, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Hindrances"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a soldier for God and facing discouragements and hindrances with determination. He shares personal experiences of facing discouragement and wanting to quit, but ultimately persevering. The speaker also highlights the love and longing that a minister should have for their congregation, using the example of Paul's love for his disciples. Lastly, the speaker warns about the tactics of Satan, who tries to hinder believers from fulfilling their calling and encourages the audience to rely on the Word of God for faith and strength.

Transcript

Remember this, as we're going through 1 Thessalonians, when you hear preachers preach, you always have to be asking this, are they giving us the whole counsel of God? The whole counsel of God. Paul, in Acts 19 and 20, he says to the elders of a church that he had helped started, remembering when I was with you, I didn't hold anything back, I gave you the whole counsel of God. Now, you can be a preacher, a pastor, a televangelist especially, and cherry pick verses.

Try to figure out what people want to hear and then just preach on those verses, but never give other truths that are in the Bible. So, it's incumbent upon me and God will judge me whether I gave you part of the gospel, the whole gospel, part of the Bible, the whole Bible. This is one of those verses, it's very odd, but it's in the flow of this letter and as it comes before us, Paul's writing to the church at Thessalonica and he's defending himself and people have come after he left and started the church and said, hey, y'all listen up, Paul doesn't really care about you.

If he would have, he would have come back to see you. A year has gone by, where's big time Paul, the apostle? He's not around. Of course, these people are up to nothing good, they wanted to degrade Paul and they wanted to get money from the people.

Back then, as we've learned, it already, as it is today, people had turned the gospel into a merchandising operation to make money for themselves, but using Jesus and a few other phrases, but the bottom line was greed. So, now Paul is defending himself and he said a few things about how he was when he was with them and now he wants to talk to them about how he wanted to see them so badly, he wanted to get to them, but why he was held back from visiting them. Remember, from Thessalonica, he went to Berea and he went on to other places in southern Greece.

He couldn't get back to them and now he's gonna explain to them why he didn't visit them. But what's interesting is Paul went to Thessalonica because he went to Greece. If he didn't go to Greece, he wouldn't have been in Thessalonica, that's part of Greece.

The gospel had never gone to Greece. Paul's first missionary trip was in Turkey. First time he went to preach the gospel, he went to what we call now Turkey.

He wanted to go to other areas in Turkey. He didn't want to go to Greece. He wanted to go to Turkey, what we call Asia, Bithynia, and now I have to show you these verses because this is the odd thing about using the word hinder.

The name of this message, which is brief, is called hindrances. You know, somebody wants to leave the building, we hold them, we hinder them from leaving. Someone wants to come in, we hinder them from coming in because they look like they have a weapon or something terrible like that.

So now we want to read this. This is how Paul got to go to Thessalonica. Paul and his companions, Acts 16, traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, where we get Galatians, having been kept hindered by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

This is strange. They want to preach and share the good news and the Holy Spirit is hindering them and saying don't go there, don't go there. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them.

He hindered them. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia, that's Greece, standing and begging him, come over to Macedonia and help us.

After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave from Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. So we learned that the reason Paul even got to Greece, to Thessalonica, was because God hindered him from going where he wanted to go and then as he realized, uh-oh, God doesn't want this, he waited, then God gave him directions, here's where I want you to go. Now he's talking to the Thessalonians, he's writing about how he has longed to see them and it's been a year, now look at this verse.

But brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned or torn away from you by being separated from you for a short time, in person but not in thought, in other words, we weren't with you but we were thinking about you. Out of our intense longing, we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you, certainly I, Paul, did, again and again, but Satan blocked our way.

By the way, just notice here, this talk, it's like boyfriend and girlfriend or someone just got engaged. But brothers and sisters, when we were torn away or orphaned by being separated from you for a short time, about a year, in person, not in thought, out of our intense longing, we made every effort to see you. Boy, you would think they were dating.

That's how a minister's supposed to feel about his people. He's supposed to love them so much that he misses them when he's not with them. He doesn't want their money, he wants them.

He cares about them, their progress. This is a challenge to all ministers. Look how Paul loved his disciples, his congregation, shall we say.

It wasn't a job, it wasn't putting in 40 hours a week, it was intense longing. You know, like a guy writes to a girl, oh, honey, I can't live without you. But we wanted to come to you, certainly I did, again and again, but Satan blocked our way.

So this is very interesting. Let's sum it up. Why did he go to Greece? Because God hindered him from going where he wanted to go.

Why couldn't he visit them? Because Satan hindered him. By the way, that's a lot of humility for the greatest Christian we ever know. How many of us would admit, I wanted to come to you and it was God's will, I really wanted to, but Satan just blocked the way.

How did Satan block the way? We don't know, we'll get to that in a second. We don't know, it's left unsaid, and when the Bible leaves something unsaid, you shouldn't use a lot of conjecture and try to figure out what happened. Was it a person, was it a sickness? Whatever it was, Paul discerned, this is Satan blocking my way, and he wrote and said it.

So let's go back to how he got there. He got to Greece because he wanted to go this way. The Holy Spirit hindered him somehow inside here, it seems.

The Spirit forbid him, don't go there. But I want to preach the gospel. Well, I know, but I don't want you to go there.

I got somebody else to do that. Okay, I can't go there, so then I'm gonna go here, and the Spirit of Jesus said, no, you're not to go there. I know, but I want to preach, they need to hear.

No, you're not to do that. Imagine how sensitive the apostle was to the Spirit of God. So then he didn't know what to do, and when you're blocked and you don't know what to do, the best rule is do nothing, just wait on the Lord.

How many say amen? So wait on the Lord, okay? Then as he waits, the Lord sends a dream to him, and he sees a man from Macedonia, from Greece, saying, come on over and help us. And then after consulting with the men he's traveling with, they concluded, God wants us to go here, not there and there. God hindered him.

God works, not only to will and to do, to bless, to strengthen, to encourage, one of God's ministries is to hinder us from going places we shouldn't go, reading things we shouldn't read, watching things we should never take in. Now, if you're not sensitive to the Spirit of God, you just make up your own mind and you do your own thing, but you suffer for it, because if you were listening and waiting and sensitive, you would have picked up the fact that God was saying, don't do that, because God is a hinderer, not only a supplier, he hinders, he hindered Paul from going where he wanted to so he could get him where God's plan wanted to place him. So what kind of things would God hinder us from? What should be our practice of watching and waiting and being sensitive and being prayerful? Oh, God would wanna hinder us, of course, from walking into temptations to sin.

God would wanna hinder us from having friends who will tear us down, because the Bible says, bad company corrupts morals. If you run with a certain kind of people, you will imitate those people. No, no, no, I'm gonna win them.

Be careful, they could win you. There's a thin line there. So if we were sensitive, God would say, no, my will is not, you're not to go to that club.

You don't belong in that club. You belong to me. I am not only not glorified there, my name is abused there.

They glorify sin there. The songs, everything about it is sensual, drug-centered, immoral, don't go there. You belong to me now.

You used to go where you wanted, but now you belong to me, and he'll try to hinder us. How would he hinder us? He can make us feel uncomfortable. He can take your peace from you in a split second.

You will feel no peace whatsoever. You'll feel a grieving. Oh, now you can say no to it and push through it, but now you're gonna be left back and have to do that class over again.

God is trying to hinder us from wrong relationships, from wrong places, from wrong books, because God loves us. Wouldn't you want to hinder your child from being involved with bad people? Wouldn't a parent try to hinder and block? I want to try to stop, with Pastor Petri's help, a woman, young lady, from getting married to a con artist who was visiting this church years ago, and I said to her, if I could, I would lay down in front of this door of my office and not let you out. I would try to hinder you.

Oh, she didn't want to know it. She had bought the lie that he was selling, and everything I said, unfortunately, came true, and she wrote me a kind letter a year and a half later. If only I would have listened.

God sent you to hinder me, but I didn't listen. God is always trying to hinder us from doing things that are bad for us. He puts up red lights.

He puts us warning signals because he loves us. A person close to us, gotten out of college, met a girl, fell in love. He loved the Lord.

I don't know about her. I don't know if she was a Christian, but you know how it is with romance. A lot of things are looking fine, you know.

So he started to date, and they got serious. Everyone knew they didn't belong together, but how do you go to say to someone, you know what? She's not meant for you. That's not God's plan for your life.

That takes a lot of wisdom, carefulness, maybe pastoral or spiritual authority. People were praying, God, don't let him do that. And then with the girl there, someone handed her a baby, a newborn baby that was related to him, a niece.

And just the way she handled that child and the meanness of spirit that she showed to this innocent child, God used it to wake him up. God used a baby to hinder him from doing something he shouldn't have done. I think in my own life, forgive the self-reference.

Rough days, the first year, year and a half in this church. No people, no money, don't know how to preach, never was trained to do this. Struggling with yourself, struggling with God.

No light at the end of the tunnel, discouragement. 18 people one Sunday in church, 16 the next. Oh, then there's 24.

Oh, now it's down to 12. Now it snows. Now you're lucky if you go yourself.

So I got so discouraged. I'll be transparent, I got so discouraged. I wanted to quit, only wanted to quit once or twice.

Strong. So I made a plan that I could do something with a Christian organization, but get out of pastoring, get out of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. I just couldn't take it.

You ever get so discouraged you can't take it anymore? Or am I the only human here, the only person? You know, as they say in Spanish, right? Demasiado, too much. So I made an appointment so I could get out, set up an interview and all of that. Supposed to be with two people who I knew, they like me.

That morning, one of them called and said, we don't want you at the meeting. They didn't even know what I was gonna say. God used them canceling me to hinder me from doing something when I was at the bottom of the pit.

Oh, has he not hindered us from doing some crazy things? Can we put our hands together? How many can look back on your life? God hindered me, God hindered me. So let's be sensitive when God is trying to hinder us because it's always for our good. Do we all agree on that? Say amen if we all agree on that.

But now I close, it wasn't about, this verse is not about God hindering. Now we know Satan hinders. Paul says, I wanted to be there with you.

I wanted to come. This is a mysterious passage. Most Christians, we're not familiar with language like this, humility like this.

I wanted to come many times. I, Paul, more than once. The Greek is a time and then again.

So not just once, I wanted to come several times. But Satan blocked my way or hindered me or stopped us. The word in the Greek is they cut in like you're on a road and someone cuts in on the road and blocks you.

That's what the word means. How did that happen? No say nada, we don't know. We don't know, was it a person? Because just like God uses people to hinder us from bad things, Satan uses people to hinder us from good things that God has for us.

Think of all the things that are going on possibly right now in your lives where Satan is blocking your way from God's best for all of us. And we don't even think of it. We think it's this person or this circumstance or these emotions.

It's none of those. Paul said underneath it all, it was the devil. He said, but Satan, the word Satan means adversary.

This is all part of the equation that we have to acknowledge. When you're a Christian, you're in a fight. We wrestle not against flesh and blood.

Notice we're wrestling. We're in combat. We wrestle against not human beings.

We wrestle against principalities and power. Satan who was once Lucifer in heaven and in the mysterious eternity past, his heart was lifted up with pride. Imagine what pride is like.

Pride turned Lucifer into Satan and was cast him out of heaven when there was no devil to tempt him. Think what pride must have, the power pride must have when he looked at God and said, I wanna be just like the most high God. So he was cast down and he became God's adversary.

And because God loves us, he's our adversary. He hates all human beings because we were created by God. But Christians who are in relationship with Christ, oh, we're his special targets.

That's why the Bible says put on the full armor of God so that you'll be able to stand. No, just trust in God. You don't have to put on any armor.

Then you'll get knocked down. Then you will get knocked down. Put on the full armor of God.

I'm gonna tell you the truth now. There's spiritual tension to life. There's an adversary.

That's what Satan means. The devil means slanderer or accuser. That's another name he has, slander, accuser.

This should make us very leery like of what pride must mean to God or slandering people behind their back or always accusing them like you're a judge or I'm a judge that I can accuse people. Slanderers, you talk about give place to the devil. Now you're talking his language when you slander people.

You might as well just open up and whistle for him to come. He's also called the God of this world behind all the media, behind all the entertainment, behind everything. The one who rules this world is Satan.

That's what God says. He's called the God of this world, the prince of the power of the air. He's called a lot of other names.

He's called Beelzebub. He's called the one who is the master of filth and smut and manure. That's another name he has.

These are his characteristics, but he doesn't let any of that on because his absolute main tool is he lies. Jesus said about him, when Satan lies, he's speaking his own language because he has lied from the beginning, so he's a liar. The main tool he uses for all of us is to get over on us and lie and make promises that are totally false.

You'll be happy if you only get with him. You know, if you only get that degree, then you'll make it in life. Then you'll be satisfied.

If you only get your name in lights, then you'll really, you know, and it's all a lie. It's just a lie. Whenever he talks, he lies.

Like someone said about a certain politician, when they're moving their lips, they're lying. This is the first mention of Satan or the devil in this letter. And notice he must have told them about him because he gives

no explanation.

He just says, Satan hindered me. And you know who Satan is because when I was there, I taught you for hours and hours and days and weeks, I taught you about who Satan is. He blocked my way.

So let's end. Satan loves to block our way. There's a call of God on your life.

You're supposed to be in the choir. You're supposed to be in the prayer bed. You're supposed to be a missionary.

You're supposed to be a pastor. He will try to hinder you from doing what God wants you to do. You need this word to live.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. This word alone will make you strong. He will hinder you every day from picking this Bible up.

And if you do pick it up, he'll try to hinder you from opening your heart. He'll let you just read it with your head. And he'll try to make you forget it so that five minutes later, if someone says, what did you read today? You won't even know if Satan has his way.

He's a hinderer. He knows how powerful prayer is. So he will hinder you from private prayer and he will hinder you from the prayer meeting because if there's anything he hates, it's when God's people gather together and try to cry out to him.

Oh, he hates that. So he'll hinder. You're too busy, aren't you? You're tired, right? You're not tired for other things, but the prayer meeting, no, I'm tired for that.

I got to watch that thing on TV. You know, I went on Sunday, that's enough. He's a hinderer and he's a liar.

This is all he does is he hinders, he blocks. That's a good thought. It's like when you play high school basketball, one of the first things you learn is how to block out, right? So the shot goes up and it's his team that shot the ball and I'm on defense and I'm guarding him, right? When the ball goes up, what you're taught to do, the fundamental is the ball is the precious thing to get the ball.

So instead of running for the ball or trying to jump for the ball, you know one thing, he'll never get the ball if I block him out. So you watch an NBA game, watch Golden State against Oklahoma City. So what they do is they go like this and the ball's up there on the rim, but you just make contact and you block him out.

And if he goes to the right, you move with him and the ball can just keep bouncing. He can never get it because I'm blocking him out. That's what Satan wants to do, block you out.

Block me out. He can't stop me from being in the ministry, he almost did, but God blocked him out. But now he'll try to block me out from studying and being sincere.

He'll try to get me covetous so I only do this for money. Listen, he never stops. Paul said, I wanted to come to you many times, but Satan blocked me.

If Satan could block Paul, do you think he's afraid of us? If he would tempt Jesus in the wilderness, do you think he's like, oh no, I can't tempt a choir member? He tempted Jesus. He's a hinderer from prayer, from the word of God, from service, from loving, from forgiving. You know, you'll hear a sermon about

forgiveness and you know, that's right, God wants me to forgive.

But then he'll come and remind you of some mean thing that person did and you'll hold on and you'll be bitter till you die. My wife and I know people, they will die in their bitterness, it seems. Satan is blocking the way to freedom.

What is Satan blocking, hindering you from? Whatever he's hindering you from, that's where the peace and the joy and the fulfillment is. It's not gonna come from, all due respect, from your wife and your family, your husband and your children, and earning a living and going to Curacao on vacation. That's not gonna fulfill you.

Jesus fills you. Only Jesus can satisfy your soul. Remember, he's the author of the Antichrist.

He will block our way, anything concerning Jesus. If the church has a goal, if the church wants to expand, he'll try to block it. Listen, that lady over there, my wife, that's all she and I have ever known in the ministry is one fight after another.

One circumstance, one no shortage of money, this, one discouragement, that. That's all it is. When you're a Christian and you're on the front line, what do you think he's doing? Sending marshmallows over there? He's sending darts.

How many know exactly what I'm talking about? Lift your hands. That's all it is. I'm so happy I married a soldier, that's what my wife is.

She's a soldier. I've been noticing no matter what happens around her, up, down, this, that, disappointment, whatever, how am I gonna do this? It's like, all right, let's get this on. God's gonna help us.

Come on, is God gonna help us? God's gonna help us. God's gonna help us. That's what, you have to be a soldier.

I know, but there are hindrances. There's so many discouragements, I don't know. Come on, wake up.

Come on, wake up. Wake up. That's like a guy going in a boxing ring when Mike Tyson was fighting, and you go in, and you go to fight, and Mike Tyson's swinging, and he goes back to his corner.

He's trying to hurt me. And you're in a boxing match. What do you think he's gonna do? Read the Bible with you? Come on.

That's why the Bible says, here's my last word, resist the devil, and he'll flee from you. I wanna say to everybody here, well, what do you do? If God is hindering you from something, be sensitive. If Satan is trying to block you from something, come on, wake up, fight.

No, I don't like to fight, that's not my personality. You can't be a Christian then. You'll never be victorious.

All Christians are warriors. Whether they're quiet, whether they're male, female, whatever race they are, whatever their calling is, you have to be a fighter. You will not block me.

You will not block me, come on, from what God wants for my life. You will not block me. You will not hinder me.

Let's close our eyes. Everybody here who say, pastor, that had my name on it. That was sermon for me.

I see where the enemy's trying to block me from that thing that God has for me. And I'm not talking about some blessing pie in the sky. I'm talking about usefulness, closeness to Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, a blessing to others.

That's what God called us to, not to a bigger house. Don't listen to that false American gospel. Satan's trying to block me from intimacy with the Lord, my Bible, my prayer life, being in the church, calling on God.

Imagine how strong the enemy is. He knows how powerful prayer is. He not only tries to stop us from praying and pastors, he tries to shut prayer out of the church, even though God said, my house shall be called a house of prayer.

And imagine, 98% of all the churches in America don't even have a meeting where they devote to prayer. Don't tell me he can't block people. Entertainment, yeah.

Great teaching, supposedly, yeah. But where it comes to really calling on God, no, I'm gonna block that. I'm gonna block that you will not call on God.

Because he knows when we call on God, God is rich in mercy to everyone who calls on him. Pastor, that was for me. I'm breaking out today.

It's breakout Sunday. I'm gonna resist the devil. He will flee from me.

I will fight. I will fight. I'm gonna say at the end of my life, I have fought a good fight.

Not I got played, I got conned, I got maneuvered. No, I fought a good fight. Yeah, I might lose a battle like Paul got blocked, but I'm not losing this war.

I am gonna defeat that enemy in the name of the Lord. In the name of Jesus, I'm coming. You just stand where you are, in front of me or behind me.

Just stand right where you're sitting and say, Pastor, I say yes to God today. I say no to the devil. And cutting in on me and blocking me, diverting me with the cares of this life, worry, money, fretting, family, for what? God put his hand on my life.

Thank you for your word today, Lord. Make us sensitive, starting with me. When you are trying to hinder us from going down a path we should not go.

Saying things we should not say. Being with people we should not be with. But even more so, give us victory over every device of the enemy.

Break us out of every hindrance. Every time he tries to divert us, stop us, discourage us, give us a breakthrough. Teach us how to resist the devil.

How to use the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. How to call on you. How to pray together as a church.

How to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Fill with the Holy Spirit. Not churchgoers, fill with the Holy Spirit.

Make the choir all it should be. Make our church all it should be. Make me and the pastors all we should be.

Every deacon, deaconess, all that they should be. Satan, the Lord is against you. The Lord is against you.

We don't come in our strength, we come in the name of the Lord. In Jesus' name. And all the people said, let's put our hands together and end the meeting.

Come on, come on, as they play, keep clapping. Turn around and greet one another. God bless you.

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