

Twin Killers

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon 'Twin Killers' emphasizes the dangers of fear and discouragement in spiritual leadership and the importance of encouragement and reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 22:07

Scripture: Romans 15:5

Topics: "Discouragement"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Symbola shares a personal experience where he was encouraged by a man of God who believed that God was going to do something awesome. He emphasizes the importance of encouraging others and speaking positive words. He also addresses the twin killers of fear and discouragement, highlighting the need to rely on God for endurance and encouragement. The sermon concludes with a reminder from Joshua 1:9 to be strong and courageous, for the Lord is with us wherever we go.

Transcript

When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they came out under what leader? How many don't remember the name of the man? Who was the man who brought them across the Red Sea? Moses. And then they wandered for 40 years because of their unbelief. They couldn't believe God's promises.

And then they got to the east side of the Jordan River, up where Moab is, and Ammon. And they finally were ready to cross over into the land. But Moses wasn't allowed because of disobedience.

And leadership was turned over to his assistant, whose name was? Joshua. And Joshua was, you talk about stepping into big shoes. You talk about trying to fill someone's place that's impossible to fill.

Imagine you're to succeed Moses, as is Moses and Pharaoh, and Moses' staff, and Moses who received the Ten Commandments, and Moses who the Bible says, God talked to him like a friend talks with a friend. So Joshua takes over. And in the first chapter and into the beginning of the second, there is a repetition of something which God gives us.

And it's, we'll look at it in the New Testament too, because remember you, commands and promises in the Old Testament that apply to us must be also found in the New Testament. Then they apply to us because they're not just old covenant regulations, which many don't apply to us. I call this the twin killers, the twin

killers.

More pastors bite the dust from one of these two than anything else. More than immorality, greed, alcoholism, drugs. In fact, many people who backslide and get involved in a lot of old junk that they used to do, it started not with the old stuff.

It started with the twin killers. God, through different people, warns Joshua, encourages him along two lines. If you're going to lead and you're going to be successful, you cannot let these twin killers get in your life.

They're worse than cancer. AIDS is nothing compared to these, because this will rip out your soul. Cancer can only take your body.

Then you go to be with the Lord. But this, oh my goodness, you can lose your calling. You can lose everything.

You can lose being a blessing to people. So let's look, Joshua one, have I not commanded you? God says in verse nine, be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified or do not fear.

Do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. So now let's look at that again in the middle. Two commands of two things, the twin killers.

Don't be terrified, i.e. don't be afraid. And don't be discouraged. Why? For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

I did a little study yesterday of the places where that word fear is. And you can have fear of what other people say can cause fear. You ever with someone who talks so negative with so much unbelief that they'll say something and Satan will use what they say to try to bring fear in your heart? Is that correct? You can get fear from the state of the world around you.

You can be tempted to fear by a lot of different things. You can be tempted like with Joshua. How am I going to do this? How am I going to do this? I'm to succeed Moses.

This is the only leader that the Israelite nation has ever known, because there was no nation under Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. But now we're a nation. We're moving.

We have an army. And now I'm succeeding Moses, who went in a tent and talked to God and came out with his face shining. See, fear of failure, fear of the unknown, fear of what people might say.

Fear is a killer. More people are held back and were held back by fear. Fear to speak.

I might not know what to say. Fear to witness. Fear of being laughed at.

Fear of being turned away by your family. Fear. And it's strange.

I actually see more fear in America where we have more comfort than you see on the mission field. From what I've heard from Pastor Petri, he goes over there and he meets these pastors in Ethiopia. They're ready to rumble.

And they're in Ethiopia. They're brave. And you go to America, we're afraid of this, that, and the other thing.

So this is one of the twin killers. The other one is discouragement. Fear comes suddenly, fear of failure, whatever, and it stops you from starting something.

Some of you here right now, today, God might want you to do something, begin a ministry, pray, join a ministry, talk to someone, call someone on the phone. But fear is paralyzing and it stops you from doing what God wants you to do. That's why if you read there, over and over God says, and don't be afraid.

And then two verses, and don't be afraid. And then Joshua talks to two and a half tribes from the eastern side of the Jordan River, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh. And they say to him out of nowhere, now look, you're going to take over as leader and we're going to honor you just like we did Moses.

But by the way, we want to tell you something, don't be afraid. Everywhere when he starts, don't be afraid, don't be afraid, don't be afraid. When God calls Jeremiah to his prophetic office and Jeremiah is going to step out, God says to him, don't be afraid.

When men look at you and yell at you or they get stiff and say, we're going to get you for prophesying against what we want to hear, don't be afraid. Never give in to fear. In World War II, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said something which stirred the nation because after Pearl Harbor, it was very scary here.

Nobody knew what would happen. It looked like the Japanese empire and then Hitler and the German army was running all over Europe. And he said, the only thing to fear is fear itself.

Fear is a killer. Fear paralyzes you. They have found and made studies, the great athletes in every sport, the ones who excel at crunch time and all of that, they're fearless.

The people who falter and collapse, it's because they have some trepidation. I can't do this. I might miss.

I better not shoot. Let somebody else shoot. I don't want to shoot.

The other guys are, give me the ball. I'm going to make this. No fear.

Everyone, when fear comes on you, whether you're a musician, you don't play as good as you can in everything in life. Once fear gets all of you, fear of failure and all of that, you're just paralyzed. The other thing is discouragement.

That means when you begin and start, I'm almost done, so then we're going to pray. Because this is what attacks the pastors that are here. Don't you think I know that? I've been attacked by fear a billion times.

The other thing is discouragement. Fear is that sudden jolt that tries to paralyze you. Discouragement is you're doing what God wants you to do.

You're involved in a good work, and now it's not happening the way you want. Your life is not working out the way you want. You're serving the Lord, but you're not getting that husband or wife that you were believing him for or whatever.

Now something else comes, losing heart. Discouragement is different than fear. It's the ability to keep on enduring and being encouraged.

What's the opposite of discouragement? Encouragement. That's why the Bible ... This is so much a problem in our lives that Hebrews says, as long as it's called today, which means every day, encourage

one another daily. Why? Because every one of us is facing discouragements every day of our life.

That's why to say a discouraging word to someone, oh my goodness. To be around discouraging people when you're facing discouragement already, that's like suicide. You ever been around a person who just pulls you down? You almost want to run away from them.

Everything is negative, discouraging. The glass is always half empty, but you meet a person full of faith, full of God. No matter what you're going through, they're saying, come on now.

You can do this. Come on. Can we say amen to that spirit of encouragement? A word of encouragement.

That's a ministry that is needed in the local church, in every church. People who have the gift of encouragement, because there's enough discouragements out there. Those are the two things, fear and discouragement.

The opposite of those two words, that's a good way to study the Bible. What are the opposites? The opposite of fear is boldness. The opposite of discouragement is encouragement.

This is why, ladies and gentlemen, we have to ask God continually to fill us with the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit, when he comes, I'm talking about supernatural Holy Spirit. I'm not talking about teaching by Pastor Cymbala.

That's not going to cut it. I'm talking about, yes, receive teaching, but there's no symposium in the world that puts boldness in you. God gives you boldness.

Oh, and there is nothing. People can encourage us, thank God, but it's God using people. But there's such a thing as a spirit of encouragement.

So now look, see, let's make sure it's in the New Testament too. It's the same thing there. Let's look.

2 Timothy 1, 6 and 7. Paul writes to this younger minister, for this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of fear or timidity. No, you're operating and I'm operating in fear and timidity.

It did not come from God. That's not something God gives a person. But what did he give us? A spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

God did not give us a spirit of fear. Timothy was younger and it seems like he had a different natural personality than Paul. Paul seemed to be just a fighter.

Timothy was seemingly more passive possibly. But because he was younger and Paul entrusted him with great responsibilities, he had this thing of, what if I mess up? Or what if older people say, who are you, kid? Who are you, young man? How in the world do you exercise spiritual authority when you're younger than people? Paul must have picked it up or heard about it. He said, hey, Timothy, stir up the gift of God that's in you.

Now, that gift of God, you could look at it as it's a ministry gift that God imparted to him through the Holy Spirit. Or some commentators believe the gift of God is the Holy Spirit that's within us. There's ministry gifts, there's also the Holy Spirit.

If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him? And when he says, stir that thing up, it's in you, but you got to stir it up. Because the way you're acting, the Holy Spirit is not controlling you. When the Holy Spirit controls you, you're bold like a lion.

You're not obnoxious, you're not a bull in a china shop, you're not impolite, you're not up in everyone's grill, but what you are is you're bold. You're under control, you're loving, you're kind, but you are bold. You don't back down from what God wants you to do.

He said, I can't teach you that. He didn't say, Timothy, I'm sending you six lessons on how to overcome timidity. Oh, come on.

Stir up the gift of God that's in you. Stir up the gift of God. The Holy Spirit's inside of you.

He's God Almighty. He's God Almighty. I got God Almighty living inside of me.

How many are born again Christians? Lift your hand. Think of this, brothers. You got God Almighty living inside of you.

For if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to Christ. Just think how we've made this into some teaching religion, and we need teaching. But my goodness, Christianity is supernatural in essence.

Born of a virgin, raised from the dead. How in the world are we going to take that and do away with the supernatural? I have Almighty God inside of me. Now, if he takes control, he can give me boldness.

Come on. Yes, he can. Say, yes, he can.

Yes, he can. Yes, he can. He can give me boldness.

I'm not trying to be fanatical or emotional and be anti-intellectual. I hope you understand that I love the Bible just as much as you do, and I read as many books as you do. I want to learn.

But my goodness, the Scripture says, stir up the gift of God that's within you. For God gives us a spirit of fear. If you're here, troubled by fear, Pastor.

Fear what the members might say. Fear people might leave a church. Fear they're going to keep their tithes back.

Fear. You don't think I know how this works? You know how many thousands of pastors I've talked to over the years? Fear of that. Fear of preaching a sermon that will flop.

Fear of this. Fear of going into a building program. Fear of a denomination.

Fear of headquarters. Fear of this. Fear of that.

It's like a cancer. So God doesn't make you crazy, but he doesn't make you bold. He makes you bold.

How many want to be bolder for Jesus Christ? Come on. Bolder. Bolder.

I want to be bolder. And the other thing is, once you start doing something for God, you got to be aware of that other killer, which is discouragement. Discouragement.

Have you not ever been discouraged? Oh, have I been discouraged? Oh, my goodness. One of the first sermons I ever preached, somebody taped it and played it back to me. I just listened to it for five minutes, and I wanted to take my life.

I wanted to get a 45 and just end it all. Oh, my goodness. You talk about discouragement.

What a mess. But Rome wasn't built in a day. God's working on all of us.

How many can feel God working in your life? But sometimes the work goes slow. Sometimes the work goes slow. And then what you have to battle is discouragement.

You're praying for an unsaved loved one. Someone asked me at lunch, how long should I pray for someone? I said, did you know that R.A. Torrey, a great Christian of another era, he prayed every day for two men for more than 50 years, and he saw them both get saved in their early 90s. What if he would have got discouraged and said, I'm not praying anymore.

Dude is never going to get saved. Nothing's going to change with this guy. Endurance.

One other verse I had here. I want to just leave it with you. May the God who gives endurance.

God gives endurance. Not the pastor. God.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Jesus Christ so that with one heart and mouth, you may glorify the God. Notice that. One heart and mouth.

You got to use your mouth that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice that. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement.

He gives boldness. He gives power. He gives endurance.

He gives encouragement. Did you know that you could be broken down, ready to quit? Do you know twice I tried to leave the ministry. I was so discouraged.

That's right. Pastor Simba tried to get out twice. Well, from what? From discouragement.

You don't think my wife's ever been discouraged. You don't. Everyone faces discouragement.

I was reading in Wesley's journal. He saved John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. He saved about 30, 35 years riding on horseback, winning people to the Lord.

In one of his journals, he's down. He's discouraged. Probably tired too because when you're tired physically, discouragement comes real quick.

He writes and he says, I don't even today, I can't even say if I'm a Christian because discouragement will mess up your mind. You think crazy thoughts when you're discouraged. God gives boldness.

God gives power. Come on. Can we say amen? God gives encouragement.

God gives endurance. Listen, you're going to make it through. We're going to make it through.

If we look to God, he's going to give us the boldness. When the going gets tough, he's going to give endurance and encouragement. I love that about God because sometimes you're not around people who encourage you.

I've met very few encouragers in my life. That's the truth. I've met very few people.

I think it's because most of us are so selfish that we're so wrapped up in our insecurities and what we're going through. We can't say a good word to anybody else because we're so worried like oh me, myself, and I. But I'm so happy God does give the ministry. I got to just say this before we pray.

I told you, I want to just say it again. A brother from Africa, apostolic ministry over in Africa, and he was over in Uganda, I think, and started churches. This is back in the 50s and 60s.

My father-in-law told me about him. So one day when I'm in the ministry and on Atlantic Avenue in this run-down building that's smaller, the church was smaller than Lobby and Smith Street. Smaller.

And he takes me out to eat. I'm just, oh my goodness, it's such a mess. Nothing.

No, just nothing. And he just had one lunch with me. And he doesn't know why.

I was just ready to quit, give up. And he just, we're eating on the corner of Atlantic and Third Avenue. I can see myself.

And he's sitting looking at me. And he's looking at the neighborhood. And he just preached to like nine people on Tuesday night.

This is my church. And he just looks at me and he goes, it's amazing. I said, what's amazing? He said, what God is going to do.

I said, what are you talking about? He went, don't you get it? This situation is so hopeless and you're not even trained. The only thing God could do is to put you here. He's going to do something so awesome that it's, I can't even tell you how awesome.

And I remember his eyes filled with tears. He said, this is a setup. If I ever saw one, God is going to do something awesome because this way he'll get all the glory.

You don't have a clue. You don't have any idea what you're doing, but God is going to do something. And you know what? I left that building a different person.

I left that building a different person. I got up and thought, oh my goodness, a man of God says that God's going to do something. He encouraged me.

Before you go to bed tonight, why don't you encourage somebody? Just say something positive someone. Say, they look nice. Say, God loves you.

Some woman came to me and said she saw evil spirits following her. I told her, look, if you're a Christian, you don't see evil spirits. You say goodness and mercy.

They're following me all the way. Get out of here. Get out of here.

Goodness and mercy. Come on. Am I right? Goodness and mercy.

All the pastors from anywhere that are here visiting, come on up out of your seats. Come on. Come on, pastors.

No more discouragement. No more fear. Come on.

Audience, stretch out your hand toward these pastors. They're from different parts of the country. Dear God, I pray in the name of Jesus.

We don't have to anoint them with oil because you've given them the oil of gladness in their heart, Lord. We pray that there will be a new boldness and a new spirit of joy and encouragement in them. Satan, we come against all your devices to bring fear and to bring discouragement into our lives.

God, we stand on your word today. You have not given us a spirit of fear. Fear is not something that you deal with in our lives, but you've given us a spirit of boldness and love and a sound mind, self-discipline.

So now, God, we pray that you will encourage my brothers, sisters that are here. And when the going gets tough, they're not going to sag. They're going to rise, Lord.

Your spirit is going to lift them up. Whatever financial pressures they're under, they will not be discouraged tonight. They will be encouraged because they believe in Jehovah Jireh, my provider.

I pray, God, that you will be with them and get them home safely when they leave here. And that you all get us home safely, Lord. We just thank you for your presence with us tonight.

But we're leaving this building singing and praising God, Lord. We're going to be singing and praising God. And we just thank you for your presence here today with us.

Lord, help lead us to someone that we can witness to or bring to church this Sunday. We ask all these things in Jesus' name.

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