

What To Do When I Am Discouraged

by Sandeep Poonen

The sermon discusses how grumbling was the biggest giant the Israelites faced in the wilderness, hindering them from entering the promised land. It emphasizes the importance of overcoming the giant of grumbling through faith in God's word and seeking to encourage others in times of discouragement. The message highlights the need to combat feelings and emotions with trust in God's promises, focusing on encouraging others as a key to spiritual growth and protection from falling away from God.

Scripture: Numbers 14:22, Philippians 2:14, Hebrews 3:12, John 21:15, 1 Corinthians 14:3, Matthew 4:4, Luke 11:5

Topics: "Overcoming Grumbling", "Encouragement in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

What is the biggest giant that the Israelites faced in the wilderness? You know that the Israelites were so afraid of going to the promised land, to Canaan, because in Canaan there were lots of giants. But what was the biggest giant that the Israelites faced before they got to the promised land? What was the biggest giant they faced in the wilderness? So they crossed the Red Sea and they were on their way to Canaan, right? And then they stopped at the edge of Canaan and said, look, we can't fight them because there are lots of giants in Canaan. What was the biggest giant they faced in the wilderness? Here's what it is.

It was grumbling. Grumbling was the giant they faced. And it was the giant of grumbling that never allowed them to face and defeat all the giants in the promised land.

After we are born again, it's like a picture of us going through the Red Sea. God miraculously saves us from the Egyptians and he takes us through the Red Sea and he finishes off the power of the devil. It's almost like how the Israelites were just miraculously taken through the waters of the Red Sea.

But then they're in the wilderness and there's really one big giant that the Israelites needed to fight in what was supposed to be a two-year journey from the Red Sea all the way to Canaan. There was really just one giant because if you look in Numbers 14, God says, there were 10 times when you tested me, 10 times

when you tried to test me and you didn't believe in me. And if you look at the 10 times, I don't have the time to go through it, but if you look at those 10 different times, 10 different times when the Israelites failed by testing God, more often than not, at least I think if I counted about seven out of the 10 times was them grumbling.

Grumbling they don't have meat, grumbling that they don't have water, grumbling that they were in front of the Red Sea and the Egyptians were going to fight them. It was all grumbling. Almost seven out of the 10 was grumbling.

One of them was worshipping the calf, but almost all the rest of them was grumbling. That's the one giant that stopped them from entering the promised land. And as we read in the memory verse, Philippians 2, do all things without grumbling and complaining because otherwise you will be disgraceful children of God.

That's what the Israelites were, disgraceful children of God, children of God who brought shame to God. And God put up with them one time, two times, three times, four times, five times, 10 times. He said, that's it.

No more. I kept giving you chances, 10 chances. That's it.

You're not entering the promised land. Your children will, but you won't. And that may be true in our lives.

God will give us chance after chance. And then at some time he'll say, you know what, your children will enter, but not you because you don't get over grumbling and complaining. And so we see that grumbling and complaining is a very, very big, important giant to face head on and early on.

And it goes along, I think, with what Megan shared in the children's time, which is feelings, feelings, feelings, feelings. They don't do you any good, right? I will not trust in my feelings. The only truth is the word of God.

Nothing else is worth believing. That truth is really what we need to get right that the Israelites didn't get right. They felt hungry.

So what did they do? They complained. What did Jesus do? He felt hungry. What did he do? He said, man shall not live by bread alone, but by the word of God, the Israelites were hungry for going without food for three days.

Jesus was hungry after going without food for 40 days, but his solution was not. I'm tougher than the Israelites. He said, no, I live by the word of God.

The only truth believing is the word of God. So that's the secret is not just toughen up and shut your mouth and don't say anything else. No, the secret is trust in God's word, trusting God's promises.

The word of God is supposed to be a life giving resource to us to compensate for the feelings that I have to kill. And a lot of my feelings can come in the way of having faith. The greatest enemy to the faith in God's word is my feelings.

Remember that F for faith, F for feelings. And that is the big giant grumbling faith, my emotions, my mood. That's basically the same thing said in different ways.

That is the one giant, dear brothers and sisters that we must go militant against. You can't go halfway. And we all have to decide that we're going to go that all the way with that giant, because that's the giant before we get to the promised land.

That's the giant that God's going to give us in the wilderness before we get to the promised land. Now, the other thing that I wanted to share was, you know, a lot of us feel most of Christendom feels that if I am discouraged, let me go and listen to a sermon, and the sermon will encourage me, or let me go to a Bible study, let me go to a midweek group meeting, and I say, Lord Jesus, I'm going to come to the midweek group meeting, and I will be encouraged. But I want us to read this verse in Hebrews chapter 12, Hebrews chapter three, verse 12 through 15.

Because again, I was talking about the wilderness period, right in between when the Israelites left Egypt and went to the promised land. Here, it's not talking about that section in Hebrew, that time period in Hebrews chapter three. And read carefully what the author of Hebrews is saying.

Take care, brethren, take care, people of God, that there is not in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. What a scary thing to have an evil heart. You're talking about, you know, different people were mentioning 2 Chronicles and having a heart that's fully His.

The opposite of that is having an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. So what should I do? Take care. Okay.

What should I do instead of having an evil, unbelieving heart? It's read, it's said in verse 13. Encourage one another day after day. Encourage one another.

Keep encouraging people. So, you know what I said earlier, we tend to think that if we are discouraged, we need to go to a Bible study only. We need to listen to a sermon and be encouraged.

No, that's not what the Bible says. The Bible says, when you are feeling discouraged, go and encourage somebody. A very big difference.

When you are feeling discouraged, go and ask the Lord to give you something to encourage somebody else. You remember that story of that man in Luke chapter 11, who has a friend who comes to him in the middle of the night, and guess what? He has no food. So what does this man do? He doesn't get discouraged.

He doesn't send that man to another friend who has food. No, he goes and knocks on the door and says, you give me food so that I can give my friend food. What is that a picture of? Lord Jesus, I'm discouraged.

I don't have any bread. Let me go and knock on God's door because this other friend of mine needs food. What do I do when I'm discouraged? I need to go and knock on God's door and say, Lord Jesus, in five minutes, my wife is going to come through the door.

My children are going to come through the door. I'm feeling terribly discouraged. What do I need to do? You need to give me a word so I can encourage them.

Rather than I need to go and listen to her sermon and have somebody else encourage me. No, I need to get a word from you, Lord, so that I can encourage others. That's what it's saying here.

If you read Hebrews chapter three, verse 12, 13, 14, very carefully. It's exactly what he's saying here. Be careful, brothers and sisters, that you don't have an unbelieving heart like these Israelites who grumbled.

Okay, Lord, I don't want to have that evil, unbelieving heart. What should I do? Encourage one another. Otherwise, you will be deceived by sin.

That is why, dear brothers and sisters, we can listen to so many sermons week after week, day after day, week after week, month after month, and not make progress because we're not following the doctor's orders. The doctor's orders is not when you're discouraged, go and keep listening to sermons. The doctor's orders are when you're feeling discouraged, when you're in danger of having an evil, unbearing heart, go and seek to encourage somebody else.

And I can speak about this with confidence because I have seen the difference in my life as I have sought to encourage others consistently. Now, I've not tried to do it for many reasons. I've not sought to encourage everybody every day.

I'm not trying to do that because I don't want to have a record. I don't want to have some great Guinness Book of World Records. Have you seen Sandeep? He's encouraging everybody else every single day he's doing it.

That's not the point. I don't see this verse as saying, you know, you got to constantly be encouraging somebody. You have to call somebody up, encourage them.

You got to send something on WhatsApp. You have to send somebody on an email. You have to write an article.

You have to send a message. No, I want to have a heart that seeks to encourage others. And out of the blue, somebody may call me or I may call somebody because I need some help.

I need to do it. But I say, Lord, I'm talking to this person. I want to encourage them.

Somebody comes to my mind because he accidentally called me. I say, I want to encourage them. And this is especially important in the times of discouragement.

In the times of discouragement, don't settle for saying, Lord, I want to be encouraged. Say, Lord, I want to encourage others because that's what the doctor is telling me to do. This is, dear brothers and sisters, you will find a big, big difference in your life.

I want to urge you, dear brothers and sisters, take this matter seriously. When you're discouraged, when you're fighting with any don't seek to be encouraged, seek to encourage others. Seek to say, Lord Jesus, I don't want to just settle for being encouraged.

I want to be an encouragement to others. When Jesus restored Peter in John chapter 21, one of my favorite stories, Peter is wanting to go back to fishing. Jesus fills his boat to overflowing and then they have breakfast.

And then Jesus says, Peter, you want to go back to your nets and your fishing. Do you love me more than Jesus? Peter says, yes. What does Jesus say? Go and encourage others.

That's what he says. Go and feed others. Go and take care of other people.

He doesn't say, just feel my love. Just, you know, I love you. You know, I love you.

Well, you love me. Well, I love you too. Let's just hang out.

No, no, no. He says, go and encourage others. He gives Peter a calling five seconds after he restores Peter.

And Peter denied Jesus in greater ways than we probably will in, you know, externally denying him to a servant girl and others. And protection from an evil, unbelieving heart, protection from being deceived by sin. It's one thing to sin.

And then it's another thing to be deceived by sin. The way we can get back out of, after we sin, the way we protect ourselves from being deceived from that sin is to encourage others. Think about that, dear brothers and sisters, husbands, wives, when you're discouraged, seek to encourage, seek to encourage.

That's the secret. That's the secret. And I've seen the difference in my life.

And what do I mean by that? You know, you know, me, we've, is there, is there a Thursday that can go by where I don't share? Is there a Thursday or Sunday, you know, back in the days, in the early days, most of the time for the first five, six years, Bobby, Jeremy, and I used to speak every week. You think we didn't battle discouragement on some weeks? You think we didn't battle difficulties at work? We didn't think we didn't struggle with long hours at work, stressful jobs, small children, but we didn't have a choice. And the Lord taught us through those fires to be consistent in seeking him to encourage others.

And it wasn't always easy. We were all many times, many times. I came to the Lord on Sunday morning and I was empty.

There are many times when I come to Thursday and I'm on empty, but it's non-negotiable for me to want to encourage others. And I've seen how the Lord has watered me and encouraged me and picked up my own spirit because I've sought to encourage others. Dear brothers and sisters, don't try to share what the Lord has taught you if it isn't to encourage others.

A lot of things the Lord speaks to me in scripture that I don't share with others because my desire is to encourage others in this context. I don't need to tell you all that the Lord is showing me. That's maybe sometime you'll find out if you read my notes, if you see some things in my Bible, you'll find some of the things that maybe I never shared.

That's okay. But the desire here is not to share everything that the Lord has taught you, all the things you're discovering through scripture. I have a heart, very simple, to encourage somebody and say, Lord, this has given me life.

I want to encourage others with that. God will bless it. Remember that.

And that is why we have our midweek meetings. If you haven't had a chance to encourage somebody, you get a chance in this time because God's given us that formula in scripture. 1 Corinthians 14 is a passage that is a chapter that talks about how the local meeting must happen.

And the one word that is repeated over and over again is prophecy, which means to encourage others. The local church meeting is not supposed to be a lot of singing or speaking in tongues. The local church meeting is full of encouraging.

One after the other, encouraging, encouraging, encouraging, encouraging. That's how vital encouragement is. And so dear brothers and sisters, don't lose hope.

Take care, as the writer of Hebrews says, take care, lest you have an evil, unbelieving heart. Take care. And so what do you do? Encourage one another so that you do not be hardened by the deceitfulness of sins.

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