



DEALING WITH DISCOURAGEMENT

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





Dealing with Discouragement

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Dealing with Discouragement

SERMON REFERENCE: Nehemiah 4:6-15, 21-22

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1810

Any work for God will be met with opposition from the devil. One of the devil's methods to stop the work of God is through discouragement.

Nehemiah 4 shows us how to deal with discouragement. While rebuilding the fallen walls of the city of Jerusalem, Nehemiah and his team faced the enemy's attack of discouragement.

This passage reveals the four causes of discouragement.

First, Nehemiah's people were worn out and fatigued.

They were in the middle of the job, working hard, growing tired. The newness had worn off, yet the end was far out of reach.

Second, they were weighted down and frustrated.

They had a task to do; rather than seeing it one step at a time, they saw the rubbish, trash, and debris. The task seemed too big.

Third, they were wrought up and fearful.

The enemy knows just when we are on the brink of difficulty, physically debilitated, or when we have more to do than we can do. He can sense when things are about to cave in. That is when he attacks.

Fourth they were written off and experiencing failure.

Unfortunately, much like in this passage, the attack can come from other people of God.

Adrian Rogers says, "The hardest thing for me to bear (as a pastor) is when those within the camp say it can't be done."

The Book of Nehemiah offers us hope, and the cure for discouragement.

The cure for physical fatigue is to renew your strength. (See Nehemiah 4:21-22). Put simply, rest. Take care of your physical body, take some time away, and let some things go.

The cure for organizational frustration is to rethink your strategy. Sometimes, we are convinced we're doing the wrong thing, when the truth is we are doing the right thing the wrong way. Don't give up the goal; refocus and reorganize.

The cure for spiritual fear is to revive your spirit. Remember the Lord; think of God's goodness in the past and His closeness in the present.

Life Application

Are you dealing with discouragement today? Are you fatigued? Frustrated? Fearful or feel like a failure? Get to the root of your discouragement and consider the cure.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The book of Nehemiah is about a building project.
 - i) Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls that had crumbled around Jerusalem.
 - (1) God's work had fallen into disrepair, disrepute, and decay.
 - (2) God raised up Nehemiah and told him to rebuild the wall.
 - ii) God raised up Nehemiah and told him to rebuild the wall.
- b) All of us are wall builders.
 - i) Walls in our lives speak of the following:
 - (1) Protection
 - (2) Separation
 - (3) Identification
 - ii) We need walls to protect:
 - (1) Our families
 - (2) Our faith
 - (3) Our future
 - iii) We need the following types of walls:
 - (1) Walls of defense
 - (2) Walls of doctrine
 - (3) Walls of decency
 - (4) Walls of duty
- c) When we rise up to build, the devil will try to stop us.
 - i) The way the devil will try to stop us is with discouragement.
- d) Nehemiah 4:6-10
 - i) In the middle of rebuilding the wall, someone came with a report stating that they couldn't do it.
 - (1) They were tired and worn out.
 - (2) The job was too big.
 - (3) They got discouraged.
- e) We all get discouraged.
- f) Discouragement is a bad disease.
 - i) It is universal.
 - ii) It is recurring.
 - iii) It is contagious.
 - iv) But it is curable.
- g) The devil is the sinister minister of discouragement.
 - i) Whenever God's people say, "Let us rise up and build", the devil will say, "Let us rise up and stop them."
 - ii) When God's people have a mind to work, the devil has a mind to wreck.



- iii) Satan will come against us with discouragement to keep us from being what we should be.
- iv) All discouragement is of Satan or self.
 - (1) It is never of God.
- h) God is called, "The God of all comfort".
 - i) 2 Corinthians 1:3
 - (1) The word "comfort" means "consolation" or "encouragement".
- i) God has cornered the market on encouragement.
 - i) The devil, who works against God, works with discouragement.
 - (1) Discouragement has always been one of Satan's chief tools.
- j) Today's message will show us the cause and the cure for discouragement.

2) THE CAUSE OF DISCOURAGEMENT (NEHEMIAH 4:10-12)

- a) They were worn out; it was a problem of fatigue.
 - i) Nehemiah 4:10
 - (1) They were tired of carrying a load.
 - ii) You are a human being.
 - (1) As a human being, you will get tired.
 - iii) Jesus Christ Himself got so tired that He sat on the curbing of a well when His disciples went to get food.
 - (1) John 4:6
 - iv) Jesus Christ got so tired that He once went to sleep in the back of a ship in the midst of a storm.
 - (1) Mark 4:37-38
 - v) You can get tired no matter who you are.
 - (1) Isaiah 40:30
 - vi) When we get physically tired, we are set up to be discouraged.
 - (1) Sometimes, the most spiritual thing to do is to get some rest.
 - vii) Nehemiah 4:6
 - (1) When the job is half done, that's when we tend to get discouraged and when our strength seems to wear out.
 - (a) When you climb a mountain and get half way up, you then feel led to go back down.
 - (b) Sometimes when people are in the middle of their marriage and the honeymoon seems to be over, the "I do" turns to "You better."
 - viii) Vince Lombardi said that "Fatigue makes cowards of us all."
- b) They were weighted down; it was a problem of frustration.
 - i) Nehemiah 4:10
 - (1) In order to rebuild the walls, they had to use the old stones that the first walls were built out of.
 - (a) They had to dig through and remove the rubbish to get to those stones so they could rebuild.
 - ii) All of us have lives that collect rubbish.
 - (1) There is organizational rubbish, moral rubbish, theological rubbish, traditional rubbish, and emotional rubbish.



- (2) In order to build, we have to sort through all of the rubbish.
- iii) You may be facing a situation that seems too big.
 - (1) The problem is not fatigue but frustration.
 - (a) You are weighted down.
 - (b) It seems like you will never get the job done.
- c) They were wrought up; it was a problem of fear.
 - i) Nehemiah 4:11
 - (1) There was actual physical danger.
 - (2) They were emotionally disturbed.
 - ii) Satan is the sinister minister of discouragement.
 - (1) If it seems like you are getting a lot of flak, it just may be that you are over the target.
 - (a) Satan will come against you.
 - (2) John 15:20
 - (a) If you are not being satanically persecuted, then ask yourself, "Why not?"
 - (3) Satan is very clever.
 - (a) He knows when you are worn out and weighted down.
 - (i) It is at this time that he comes to get you wrought up and to make threats against you.
- d) They were written off; it was a problem of failure.
 - i) Nehemiah 4:11-12
 - ii) It is bad enough when your enemies say that it cannot be done.
 - (1) But when your friends say that it cannot be done, that is the final blow.
 - iii) Ten different times, those who were supposed to be on their side said that they would never rebuild the wall.
 - iv) There are always those friends who come to us and tell us that we just can't do it.
 - (1) Friends like that are like a drink of water to a drowning man.

3) THE CURE FOR DISCOURAGEMENT (NEHEMIAH 4:13-15, 21-22)

- a) There is a physical cure: renew your strength.
 - i) Nehemiah 4:21-22
 - ii) If you are discouraged, then the problem may be as simple as:
 - (1) You need to rest.
 - (2) You need to change our diet.
 - (3) You need to exercise.
 - (4) You may need to go to the doctor and get a checkup.
 - iii) When you are worn out physically, you can get discouraged.
 - iv) There is an interesting story in the Old Testament about the prophet Elijah.
 - (1) 1 Kings 19:4-8
 - (2) Elijah was a man of God, but he got so discouraged one time that he wanted to die.
 - (a) He had a pity party.
 - (i) He was drinking from the intoxicating cup of self-pity.
 - (b) He was worn out.
 - (i) He had been without food, rest, and sleep.



- (c) He sat under the juniper tree, and he prayed to die.
 - (i) We thank God for answered prayer, but have we ever thanked God for unanswered prayer?
- (d) Elijah thought that he was the only prophet of the Lord.
 - (i) But the Lord had 450 people who had not bowed their knee to Baal.
- (e) God had Elijah to sleep, eat, and get some rest.
- (3) Psalm 127:2
- (4) Never make a major decision when you are fatigued or depressed.
- (5) The reason why you may be depressed is that you are not taking care of the temple that God has given you; your body.
 - (a) God said to Elijah, who wanted to die, to lie down and sleep.
- v) Nehemiah told the people to work in the daytime and sleep in the nighttime.
 - (1) They needed some rest.
- b) There is an organizational cure: rethink your strategy.
 - i) Nehemiah 4:13-14
 - ii) If you are discouraged in a task, it may not be that you are doing the wrong thing, it might be that you are doing the right thing in the wrong way.
 - (1) You need to rethink your strategy.
 - iii) Set aside an hour or two to think things through.
 - iv) Find out what is the rubbish and where the stones are that you need to build with.
 - (1) Pareto Principle: "20% of what we do produces 80% of the results."
 - (2) Many times, we deal with things that don't really matter.
 - (a) We deal with the rubbish rather than the stones.
 - v) Nehemiah didn't give up the goal; he just refocused.
 - vi) Do you have a God-given goal?
 - (1) Have you sat down, not only to renew your strength, but to also rethink your strategy?
 - (2) Spend some time alone and write down those things that you should do and refocus.
 - (a) This is one of the great cures for discouragement.
- c) There is a spiritual cure: revive your spirit.
 - i) Nehemiah 4:14
 - (1) The cure for fear is to remember the Lord.
 - (2) This is one of the great verses in all of the Bible.
 - (3) In this verse, the word "terrible" means "terrifying to your enemies".
 - ii) How do you revive your spirit?
 - (1) Just remember the Lord.
 - iii) The Bible says that King David encouraged himself in the Lord.
 - (1) 1 Samuel 30:6
 - iv) When you get discouraged, encourage yourself in the Lord.
 - (1) Think of God's goodness in the past.
 - (a) Think of all that God has done for you.
 - (i) Count your blessings.
 - (ii) See how faithful God has been.



- (b) Psychologists tell us that gratefulness is one of the healthiest emotions that we can have.
 - (c) It is almost impossible to be grateful and discouraged at the same time.
 - (2) Think of God's closeness in the present.
 - (a) When you are in the midst of a problem, remember the Lord.
 - (i) God is bigger than your problem.
 - (b) Hebrews 13:5
 - (c) God is with you right now.
 - (3) Think of God's faithfulness in the future.
 - (a) God has said that He will never leave us nor forsake us.
 - (i) Hebrews 13:5
 - (b) Philippians 4:13
 - v) Fear is forgetting God.
 - (1) Don't be afraid; remember the Lord.
 - (a) Nehemiah 4:14
 - (2) 2 Timothy 1:7
 - (3) Psalm 27:1
 - (4) If you are afraid, it is because you have taken your eyes off of the Lord.
 - vi) We serve a great God.
 - vii) Corrie Ten Boom: "Look at the world, you will be distressed. Look within, you will be depressed. Look at Christ, you will be at rest."
- d) There is a psychological cure: resolve your success.
- i) Nehemiah 4:14-15
 - ii) Just say, "I will, by the grace of God, succeed."
 - (1) This is not positive thinking; this is faith.
 - (2) First, you remember the Lord when you say this.
 - (3) Then say, "I have victory in Jesus."
 - iii) It is always too soon to quit.
 - (1) Remember what is at stake.
 - (a) Nehemiah 4:14
 - (2) They went right back to the task.
 - (a) Satan's plan had failed.
 - iv) Nehemiah said that they were going to do it.
 - (1) They just kept on building, and they built the wall.
 - v) Don't try to make yourself feel encouraged.
 - (1) You will never feel your way into a work.
 - (2) But you can work your way into a feeling.
 - (a) Simply, get back to the job.



4) CONCLUSION

- a) When you are discouraged, you can do the following things:
 - i) Get your rest, change your diet, and get some exercise.
 - (1) Resign from being the sovereign of the universe.
 - (a) Let God have it back again.
 - (2) Psalm 127:2
 - ii) Give yourself some think-time and ask, "What am I doing?"
 - (1) Are you doing a right thing the wrong way?
 - (2) Do you need to reorganize your life as you get the stones out of all the rubbish that surrounds your life?
 - iii) Put your eyes on the Lord.
 - (1) Remember God.
 - (2) We cannot look into the face of God and harbor fear in our hearts at the same time.
 - (a) 2 Timothy 1:7
 - iv) Then, by the grace of God, say that you will not give up or give in.
 - (1) God didn't call you to fail.
 - (a) 2 Corinthians 2:14
- b) This is not a positive thinking pep-talk.
 - i) These are spiritual principles out of the Word of God.
- c) Don't give in to discouragement.
 - i) Philippians 4:13
- d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Would you be finding the book of Nehemiah, it's about half way through the Old Testament, and I want you to turn to chapter 4. The book of Nehemiah is about a building project. Actually, Nehemiah is rebuilding the walls that crumbled around Jerusalem. God's work had fallen into disrepair and disrepute and decay and God raised up a man whose name was Nehemiah. And God told Nehemiah to rebuild the wall.

Now all of us are wall builders. Walls in our lives speak of something. They speak of protection, they speak of separation, they speak of identification. And you need some walls. You need some walls to protect your family, and you need some walls to protect your faith. You need some walls to protect your future. We need walls of defense, and walls of doctrine, and walls of decency, and walls of duty. But when you rise up to build, the devil will try to stop you and the way the devil will try to stop you is with discouragement.

I want you to take God's Word and look if you will in Nehemiah chapter 4 verses 6 through 10. Nehemiah says, "So built we the wall, and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof; for the people had a mind to work, but it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped," that is the open places began to be filled in, "then they were very wroth," plain English, they were angry, "and they conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. And Judah said, 'The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.'"

Right in the middle of the whole thing, there was somebody who came with a report and said, "We can't do it. We're tired. We're worn out. The job is too big." And they got discouraged. Let me ask you a question: do you ever get discouraged? Of course you do. I mean, discouragement is a disease and it's a bad disease and it's universal, it's reoccurring and it's contagious, but it's curable. And I'm so grateful for the book of Nehemiah that has been a constant encouragement to me as a pastor and a leader through the years. As a matter of fact, I stayed in the book of Nehemiah in my heart and mind as we were making the move coming out here. And I want to show you today from the book of Nehemiah what to do when discouragement comes. Now if you feel so low that you could sit on the curb and dangle your feet I want you to pay attention, because there is a way up. We could entitle this message, how to get up when you are down.

Now the devil is the sinister minister of discouragement and whenever God's people say, "Let us rise up and build", the devil will say, "Let us rise up and stop them." And when God's people have a mind to work, the devil has a mind to wreck. And one of the ways that Satan will keep you from being what you ought to be to your family, being what you ought to be in your business, being what you ought to be in your physical health, being what you ought to be in your Bible study, being what you ought to be in your soul winning, wherever it is, in your romance, whatever it is. Satan will come against you with discouragement. And let me say this, that all discouragement is of Satan or self; it is never of God. God is called the God of all comfort and that word comfort means consolation or encouragement. God has cornered the market on encouragement and the devil, who works against God, works with discouragement.



There's an old fable that says that one day the devil was auctioning off his tools, but there was one tool marked not for sale. And he was auctioning off fear, and he was auctioning off hatred, and pride, and envy, and lust, but there was a strange looking tool there, well worn. And somebody said, "Why is that not for sale?" He said, "I can't afford to sell that one. That's my most valuable tool. That's discouragement." He said, "It's so worn because I use it often to slip in. And when I pry a man's heart open with discouragement, then I can do almost anything I want to do." Discouragement has always been one of Satan's chief tools. Now if your discouraged, discouraged with your child, discouraged with your marriage, discouraged with your job, with your service, with your health, I want you to pay attention now because I want to show you the cause and the cure for discouragement. And it's right here in Nehemiah chapter 4.

Now think with me about **the causes for discouragement**, actually there are four simple causes why we get discouraged and they're right here in the Word of God. The first reason that these people got discouraged is simply this, **they were worn out**. It was a problem of fatigue. Look if you will in Nehemiah 4 verse 10, "And Judah said, 'The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed.'" That is, they were tired. They were tired of carrying a load. Now you might as well admit it, you're a human being and as a human being you're going to get tired. Jesus Christ Himself got so tired He set on the curbing of a well, when His disciples went out to get food. Jesus Christ, the very Lord of glory, got so tired one time that He went to sleep in the back of a ship in the midst of a storm. You can get tired no matter who you are. The Bible says in Isaiah 40 verse 30, "Even the youths shall faint and utterly fall." And if you get physically tired, you're set up to be discouraged. Sometimes the most spiritual thing is to go to bed. I'm serious. These folks who think that they don't need the rest, they're a little more spiritual than our Lord. You burn the candle at both ends, you're not as bright as you think you are.

Now, when does discouragement come? Look if you will in Nehemiah 4 verse 6, "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof." When the job is half done, that's when you tend to get discouraged, and that's when your strength seems to wear out. I mean, if you ever decide you want to climb a mountain, and you get about half way up, you feel lead to go back. When the new wears off, you buy a new car, and boy that new car smell that's just wonderful, but when you get it half paid for you know. And you know what an auto-biography is? Thirty-six payments and I'm junk. And you get it about half paid for and then you say, "I wonder if I ought to have done this at all."

Then sometimes our strength seems to go out of us and we get weighted down. These people were worn out. The problem of fatigue. One of the great football coaches of all time, Vince Lombardi, said this, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." Fatigue. And so number one, here's one reason why you might get discouraged, you just may be worn out.

Number two, not only were they worn out, **they were weighted down**. Look in Nehemiah 4 verse 10 also. The Bible says, "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish." Now, we can tell from the earlier part of this chapter in order to rebuild the walls they had to use the old stones that the first walls were built out of. But they had to dig through the rubbish to get those stones and they had to remove the rubbish to rebuild. And so their digging through all of this. They are worn out and they're weighted down. I mean, the task was not glamorous. It's not glamorous to dig through rubbish looking for stones. And all of us have lives that collect rubbish. There's organizational rubbish, and moral rubbish, and theological rubbish, and traditional rubbish, and emotional rubbish. And in order to build, we've got to, somehow, sort through all of that. And you may be facing a situation now that just seems absolutely too big.



And your problem is not fatigue, its frustration. You're not only worn out, but you're weighted down. And you just seem like you'll never get it done. The job is too big, it can't be done.

Now, here's the third cause of discouragement. Not only were they worn out, that's fatigue. Not only were they weighted down, that's frustration. But **they were wrought up**. Look in Nehemiah 4 verse 11, "And our adversaries said, 'They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.'" Now, there was actual physical danger. And so not only were they worn out and weighted down, but they were wrought up. I mean they were emotionally disturbed. There's the problem of fear. And again I want to say that Satan is the sinister minister of discouragement. And if it seems like you're getting a lot of flak, it just may be that you're over the target, because Satan will come against you. And Jesus said in John chapter 15 and verse 20, "Remember the word that I said unto you, 'The servant is not greater than his Lord.' If they have persecuted Me they will persecute you also." And if you're not being persecuted I just wonder why not.

Now Satan is very clever, he knows when you're worn out and when you're weighted down. It's at that time he comes to get you wrought up. It's that time he makes those threats against you. And you're going to find that you're going to have the problem of fatigue, frustration and fear and those begin to get together. And when they begin to get together, you get discouraged. But there's one other cause of discouragement.

Not only were they worn out, that's fatigue; not only were they weighted down, and that's frustration; and not only were they, friend, wrought up, that's fear. But **they were written off**, that's failure. Look if you will in Nehemiah 4 verse 11, "And our adversaries said, 'They shall not know,'" now verse 12, "And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, 'From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.'" Now it's bad enough when your enemies say it can't be done, but when your friends say it can't be done that's the coup-de-grace. Ten times the Jews, I mean their fellows, those who were supposed to be on their side said, "You can't do it!" And they said it over and over and over again, that is, "You are a failure Nehemiah. You will never get it done."

I've been in the ministry for a long time and I know that perhaps the hardest thing for me to bear is when those within the camp say it can't be done. I can remember the first, it seems like every church that I've been in we've had a building program. And in every building program there's always been someone who said, "It can't be done." I remember the little church I was pastoring in seminary down there on the gulf coast of Mississippi. And near Bay St. Louis, a little town called Waveland. A wonderful little town. And we had a little building there that had been an army barracks building, and we were meeting in that building and we needed some educational space. We didn't have any money, we didn't have two nickels to rub together, but I figured God wanted us to build a building. And so I got some people, I said, "Let's just dig the footing." And they said, "Well we don't have." I said, "I know. But let's just dig the footing any way." And we didn't have any contractor or anything like that. We didn't have anybody to put in the footing, but we walked it off and I got some shovels and we got out there and started to dig. And I can see it in my mind's eye, right now, I can remember the individual who came up and looked at us and said, "What are you doing?" Said, "We're going to build a building. We're digging the footing." And I can remember that person saying, "It will never be done!" But it was. It was. We built the building.

I can remember in Ft. Pierce when we needed a building in Ft. Pierce after I got out of seminary and we started to build. And I remember a man, he was a good man. I mean one of the leading men; he loved me.



But a precious man. And he said, "How you going to do it?" And I said, "Well I believe God wants us to do." He said, "It will never be done!" But it was. It was.

I remember at Merritt Island, the next church, we decided we were going to do something. And we were going to build some buildings and enlarge the program greatly. And I remember one of my dear preacher friends when I told him what we were going to do. He says, "Oh, Adrian, let me feel your shoulders. I don't believe that you're able, I don't believe that you can do it." Of course I could, it's God that does it. But you know, we have those friends that come to us and tell us, "You just can't do it." Friends like that are like a drink of water to a drowning man. You know, they're just negative. And we get discouraged. And so how do we get discouraged? Fatigue, frustration, fear, and failure. And these things together, I mean when we get worn out, weighted down, when we get wrought up, and written off, we get discouraged.

Well what is **the cure for discouragement?** If you're discouraged today, I mean, if you are discouraged with your children, discouraged with your marriage, discouraged with your schedule, discouraged with whatever. What is the cure for discouragement? Well number one, there's a physical cure, **renew your strength.** Now look if you will in Nehemiah 4 verses 21 and 22, "So we labored in the work," now you have to keep on working, "and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. Likewise at the same time I said unto the people, 'Let every one of you with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labor on the day.'" That is, go lie down and get some rest.

If you're discouraged, your problem may be as simple as this, that you just need to rest. You need to change your diet. You need to get some exercise. You maybe just need to go to the doctor and get a checkup. It may be physical, it maybe emotional, maybe you need a checkup from the neck up, but go and get a checkup and find out how you're doing. Physically, when you get worn out physically and the problem of fatigue comes you can get discouraged.

There's an interesting story in the Old Testament about another man, a prophet whose name was Elijah. Elijah was a man of God, but he got so discouraged one time he wanted to die. And put in your margin First Kings chapter 19 and let me read that to you. First Kings chapter 19 beginning in verse 4 through 8. It speaks of Elijah and it says, "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a juniper tree and he requested for himself that he might die. And he said 'It's enough now, oh Lord, take away my life if I'm not better than my fathers.'" Evidently he thought he was somewhat better than his ancestors and he found out he was just the same, that he was a human being. And now notice in verse 5, "And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angle touched him, and said unto him, 'Arise and eat.' And he looked, and behold, there was a cake baking on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, 'Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.' And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God."

Now Elijah had a pity party. He got so discouraged he said he wanted to die. Of course he really didn't mean that, he'd just run cross country to get away from Jezebel. If he'd wanted to die all he had to do was stand still, Jezebel would have taken care of him. She'd already said, "I'm going to make you a foot shorter at the top. I'm going to take off your head." And he's just drinking from the intoxicating cup of self-pity. But he's worn out. I mean, he's been without food, he's been without rest, he's been without sleep and he gets



under the juniper tree and he says, "Oh I wish I could die" and he even prays to die. Now we thank God for answered prayer, have you ever thanked God for unanswered prayer? Did you know we'd be in the soup if God answered all our prayers? Thank God He doesn't. He's said, "God I want to die." God said, "You're not going to die, you're going to sleep. Lie down son and sleep." And then He said, "Wake up and eat." And then He says, "Lie down and sleep." And then He says, "Wake up and eat."

You know, probably, you just might need a vacation. You might just need to take some time off and let some things go. And you know, Elijah thought he was the only prophet of the Lord. Lord said, "You know I've got a lot around here besides you Elijah. I've got four hundred and fifty people haven't bowed their knee to Baal. Go to sleep and get some rest." The Bible says in Psalm 127 verse 2, "It is vain to rise up early, to stay up late, to eat the bread of sorrows. He giveth his beloved sleep." And maybe that's what you need, maybe you just simply need some rest.

Let me give you some advice. Never make a major decision when you're fatigued. Just don't do it. When you're depressed, don't do it. I mean God's people. Do you know what the big sin would be for Baptists, you know we don't drink, we don't gamble, so what do we do? We gorge. I heard about a preacher one time, he saw an Indian and he thought he'd have some fun with the Indian. And he said to the Indian, "Ugh, you heap big Indian, me heap big preacher." The Indian said to him, "Me heap big Indian, you just big heap." I'm serious folks, the reason that some of us may be depressed is we just don't take care of the temple that God gave us. And God said to this man who wanted die, "Hey, lie down and sleep." Nehemiah said to those people who said, "We can't build the wall!" He said, "Work in the daytime, sleep in the night time; you need some rest." There was a French philosopher who said, "I have so much to do today I simply must go to bed." Think about it.

Alright now, listen, there is the physical cure, renew your strength, there's and organizational cure, **renew your strategy**. Now look in chapter 4 verses 13 and 14, when they said it can't be done and the enemy saying, "We're going to kill you." And your friends are saying, "Yeah you're going to get killed." Look in verse 13, Nehemiah said, "Therefore, set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and the rulers, and to the rest of the people, 'Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord,'" and then he gets the whole thing reorganized. He says, evidently we're doing it the wrong way. Now let me say this, that if you are discouraged in a task it may not be that you're doing the wrong thing, it might be that you're doing the right thing in the wrong way and you need, just simply to rethink your strategy, renew your strength and **rethink your strategy**.

Brother Bob Sorrell said something to me about fifteen years ago that I have never forgotten. He said, "Pastor, you need some more think time?" Some think time, and that was so true. Did you know that if you're discouraged, that if you would just set aside an hour or two just simply to think through the whole thing, I mean just think it through and find out what is the rubbish and where are the stones that I need to build with.

There's an Italian named Pareto and he is a leader and he has a thing called a Pareto Principle and here's the Pareto Principle. He says that, "20% of what you do produces 80% of the results. 20% of what you do produces 80% of the results." Now so many times we're dealing with things that don't really matter. We're just simply dealing with the rubbish rather than the stones. Nehemiah didn't give up the goal, he just refocused. Do you have a God-given goal? I mean, is it clear? Have you ever really just sat down, not only to



renew your strength, but to rethink your strategy? I want to challenge you to spend some time alone; I do this from time to time. I keep a notebook. Where I just open the notebook, I write down those things that I think I ought to do and refocus. And that's one of the great cures for discouragement.

Now here's the third thing. You see, for fatigue, you renew your strength. For frustration, you rethink your strategy. Now not only, however, is there a physical and an organizational, there's a spiritual cure. You need to **revive your spirit**. Look in Nehemiah 4 verse 14, "And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, 'Be not ye afraid of them.'" Now what is the cure for fear? Look at it, "Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord." That's one of the great verses in all of the Bible. I suggest you take out a pen and underline it. "Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible." The word terrible means terrifying to your enemies. Now, there is a physical cure, an organizational cure, their friend is a spiritual cure. Just remember the Lord. Renew your strength, rethink your strategy and revive your spirit. How do you do that? Just remember the Lord.

In First Samuel 30 verse 6, the Bible says of King David, "David encouraged himself in the Lord." You get discouraged, encourage yourself in the Lord. How are you to encourage yourself in the Lord? Let me tell you how to encourage yourself in the Lord. Number one, **think of God's goodness in the past**. If you're discouraged, just think of all that God has done for you. Count your many blessings. See how faithful God has been. Psychologists tell us that gratefulness is one of the most healthy emotions that you can possibly have. It's almost impossible to be grateful and discouraged at the same time. Count your many blessings, remember God's goodness in the past.

And then remember **God's closeness in the present**. You're in the midst of a problem, remember the Lord. Is your problem greater than God? Our Lord says in Hebrews 13 verse 5, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." And I want you to know friend, if you're discouraged right now, God has been good to you in the past and He is with you right now. Remember the Lord, remember the Lord.

And then think not only of His goodness in the past and His closeness in the present, but think of **His faithfulness in the future**. He said, "I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you." And He says in Philippians 4:13, "You can do all things through Christ who will strengthen you." Encourage yourself in the Lord. Do you know what fear is? Let me tell you what fear is. Fear is forgetting God. That's all it is. It's just forgetting God. He says, "Don't be afraid remember the Lord."

Let me give you some verses, Second Timothy 1 verse 7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Psalm 27 and verse 1, "The Lord is my light and my strength whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Fatigue, renew your strength. Frustration, refocus your strategy. Fear, remember the Lord. I'm telling you, if you're afraid it's because you've taken your eyes off of the Lord. Nehemiah said, we serve a great God. What a mighty God we serve.

Robert Louis Stevenson told a story, I read it many, many years ago about some passengers who were on a ship. It looked like the ship may be going down. It was a tumultuous storm and the passengers were below and they were whispering one to another, will we go down? Are we safe? One of the passengers said, "I've just got to find out", and he made his way across those heaving decks and up to the pilot house where the pilot of that ship was there with his hand on the wheel and he looked at him. The pilot knew he was afraid and just turned and smiled at him. The man didn't say a word, but he just went back below. And he said, "Were going to be alright." He said, "I've seen the face of the pilot and he smiled at me." What you



need to do is to see the face of God. You need to find the smile of God, and, I tell you friend that He has sailed rougher seas than the one that you're in right now. Corrie Ten Boon said this, "Look at the world, you'll be distressed. Look within, you'll be depressed. Look at Christ, you'll be at rest." Remember the Lord.

Now the last thing, not only is there the spiritual cure, but there's the psychological cure. Not only should you renew your strength, but **resolve your success**. Look now in Nehemiah 4 verses 14 and 15, "And I looked up and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, 'Be not afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible,'" now listen to this, "'and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.' And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, that God had brought their counsel to nought, and that we returned all of us unto the wall, every man unto his work." Folks, psychologically just resolve your success. Just say, "I will by the grace of God succeed."

Now, that's not positive thinking, I'm talking about faith. First of all, you remember the Lord when you say this and then you say, "I have victory in Jesus." If you're discouraged today, I want to tell you, it's always, always too soon to quit. Don't give in and don't give up. And why? Because remember what's at stake. Look in Nehemiah 4 verse 14, "Be not afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses." The moral situation looks bleak, our enemies are laughing, and the hordes of Hell are marching, but remember the Lord and let's stand up for our children. They went right back to the task and Satan's plan had failed.

I read these words one time, "I want to let go, but I won't let go. There're battles to fight by day and by night. For God and the right, I'll never let go. I want to let go, but I won't let go. I'm sick 'tis true, worried and blue and worn through and through, but I'll not let go. I want to let go, but I won't let go. I'll never yield. Lie down on the field and surrender my shield? I'll never let go. I want to let go, but I won't let go. May this be my song, through legions of wrong, oh God, keep me strong. I'll never let go." And that's what Nehemiah said. He said, "We're going to do it", and they just kept on building and they built the wall.

Don't try to make yourself feel encouraged, you will never feel your way into a work, but you can work your way into a feeling. I mean, just simply get back to the job. Listen again, get your rest. It may be just as simple as that. Change your diet, get some exercise, and resign from being the sovereign of the universe and let God have it back again. He gives His beloved sleep. That deals, friend, with this fatigue.

And then just give yourself some think time and say, "What am I doing? I mean, am I doing a right thing the wrong way? Do I need to reorganize my life, as I get these stones out of all of this rubbish that surrounds my life?" Then put your eyes on the Lord, remember God. And you cannot look into the face of God and harbor fear in your heart at the same time. "God has not given us the spirit of fear."

And then say, "By the grace of God, I will not give up and I will not give in. God did not cause me to fail, God did not call me to fail." The Bible says in Second Corinthians 2:14, "Thanks be unto God who causeth us," listen now, "always to triumph in Christ Jesus." If you think I'm just giving you a positive thinking pep-talk you're wrong. I am talking about spiritual principles out of the Word of God. And my faint hearted friend don't give in to discouragement.

Let's bow in prayer. Heads are bowed. Father God, I just pray now for that businessman who's discouraged, help him Lord God to get his rest. I pray dear Lord for that housewife who doesn't know how she's going to make all those ends meet, maybe that single mother, Lord I just pray that you'd help her to rethink her



strategy, to pray and know that there is a way, there is a plan. Father, I pray for that student who's filled with fear, Lord that she might remember the Lord. Lord, I pray for the one who's about to quit, about to throw in the towel, Lord that even right now, even right now they'll hear You say, "You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you."

If you're not certain that you're saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life." Could I lead you in a prayer? We'll call this prayer the sinner's prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? "Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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