

June 17, 2012

The Believers Response To Discouragement Pastor Charles Mendenhall

Heb 12:1 " Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," KJV

This cloud of witnesses that it speaks of is mentioned in chapter 11 of Hebrews and is also all those who we have known who have died and are now in heaven awaiting us, encouraging us to run our race.

"Lay aside every weight" there are things which cause us to be sidetracked sometimes. Weight means to be loaded or weighted down so heavily that it makes a bow, it weakens us.

Discouragement is a weight because it weakens us and affects those we are around.

"Sin that does so easily beset us", these little sins or weights that will so easily sidetrack us, they will cause us to stop making spiritual progress upon the high places of trouble and suffering. Discouragement can become a pattern in our lives, where something constantly bothers us, something that is predictable. When it becomes this way it becomes a weight and we will have to deal with it. It weights us down in relationship to making spiritual progress.

The following scriptures in Joshua tells him four times how to be strong and of good courage and to receive his inheritance.

Joshua 1:6,7,9,18 " 6 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. 18 Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage." KJV

In order for us to receive what God has promised us, we will have to develop courage in our lives, be a doer of the Word of God, learn not to be afraid and to make correction in our lives in order to stay on course.

We have a choice to either be discouraged or encouraged, we must decide the path we want to take.

In the midst of discouragement, God has a plan and the devil also has a plan. The devil's plan is to take us off course, get us weighted down and cause us to see all the circumstances or adversity around us. We cannot see the answer that God has for us in the midst of discouragement. However, God's plan is that we develop strength and faith in the midst of adversity and that we grow. The devil's plan is that we fail, but God's plan is that we grow and stay focused on Him, so we can hear from Him and see a way out.

An example is given of Elijah and how he dealt with discouragement. In chapter 18 of 1st Kings it tells of the victory that he had had over the prophets of Baal, his prophecy regarding no rain in the land and how he had outran the chariots after it began to rain. However, in chapter 19, because of Queen Jezebel's threat to kill him, he became afraid and asked God to just kill him.

1 Kings 19:2-3 "2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time. 3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there." KJV

1 Kings 19:8-9 "8 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. 9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?" KJV

We can expect God to come to us in a supernatural way in our discouragement, God will show up. God did the supernatural for Elijah, providing for him all that he needed and the Word of the Lord came to him.

God will give us a word as we begin to believe in our time of discouragement. What are we going to do with the word that God gives to us in the midst of our discouragement? Are we going to receive it and act upon it or are we just going to write it off, refusing to believe?

You can expect a word from God. He deals with us all differently, but yet He deals with the same principles. He is constantly drawing us to Him. Sometimes we receive a word before adversity comes giving us time to make preparation. Remember, God is not mad at us in the midst of our discouragement others may be, but He is not. He is viewing us through the finished work of Jesus. We are the ones who want to quit, because of the deceitfulness of the enemy telling us that we will never succeed.

God wants us to succeed, He has a plan for us to be fulfilled and He is not writing us off. If we make a mistake, He still is not mad; religion may be but not God. God does not speak to us based on our performance.

Elijah felt that he was the only one that had done what God wanted, but God assured him that there were others who were still serving the Lord. God lets him know that there were other things left for him to do and gave him the anointing to do them. The only way that Elijah was able to get out of discouragement was he had an encounter with God.

Have you ever felt like you were the only one who was right and that all the others were wrong? This is a lie from the enemy. Religion causes us to believe that God gets mad at us because our day has not gone right and we get discouraged. Religious people believe that God cannot control

His temper, and is like we are. This is so far from truth.

God is constant; there is no shadow or variableness in Him. God reconciled the world and brought it into harmony to Himself by and through Jesus Christ and is not charging us with our sins. He laid them on Jesus and Jesus paid the penalty for them. He is waiting for us to accept Jesus as our personal Saviour.

God does not come to us because we have done everything right, He comes to us because He loves us and Jesus has paid the price.

What is a Christian's response in the midst of discouragement? Are we to resist or are we to yield to it? If it is a pattern we will probably yield to it and the pattern will have to be broken. A pattern of discouragement will poison our future.

What does the Bible say that our responsibility is?

Discouragement comes as a result of hanging around people who are negative, it comes as a result of looking around and thinking that only a few are doing the work that needs to be done, some feel like God has let them down.

The following is an example of David and the discouragement that came upon him and his men. David has been running from Saul after many attempts had been made on his life, he is living in the land of the Philistines and has found favor with one of the lords there, who had given him a city for his family and those following with him. A battle is about to be fought, but the Philistines do not want him to fight with them because of the fear that David might turn on them over power them. So he and his men returned to Ziklag where they found that the city had been attacked and all their families had been carried off.

1 Samuel 30: 1-6 " And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; 2 And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. 4 Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." KJV

These men who were nobodies, that David had raised up, they wanted to kill him. They felt it was his fault that all this bad had fallen on them and their families. But David, after much weeping, after much discouragement, raised himself up and encouraged himself in the Lord. David received a word from the Lord telling him to go after the Amalekites and he would recover all that had been taken from him and his men. David received his back and all the spoil that had been gathered from others the Amalekites had stolen from.

It is important to find out who we are in Jesus. We will begin to rise to another level if we will meditate on who we are in Jesus.

It is our responsibility if discouragement is a pattern in our lives, and sooner or later we will have to come to the realization that we hold the key as to whether discouragement holds on to us or is broken. We hold the keys. We can encourage ourselves in the Lord.

Most people when they become discouraged will begin to stay away from church, they will cease praying, and they will not seek God in their circumstances. But going to the house of God and receiving a word from the Lord will set us free.

Heb 3:12-14 " *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;*" KJV

Tough love sometimes is needed, basic truth to be spoken but must be spoken in love. Do not go to someone, wanting to help, but causing condemnation to them. Instead, love them and help them to be drawn up and out of the discouragement that they are in.

Eph 4:15 " *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*" KJV

Sometimes people choose to stay in discouragement wanting to blame others for their circumstances.

Our responsibility as Christians is not to wait on someone else to help us, but we must be able to ask for help from others whom we know will. Do something to resist discouragement. A life of prayer is always an asset. Prayer is the medicine which the Lord would prescribe to us to turn discouragement back

Luke 18:1 " *Also [Jesus] told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not to turn coward (faint, lose heart, and give up).*" Amp

Luke 18: " *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*" KJV

Paul wrote in Hebrews and Galatians that the law is dead and the blood of Jesus is far superior and there is no works involved, he also wrote that they were using their new found liberty to bring them into bondage or the works of the flesh in contrast to the fruit of the spirit. Galatians 2 says that faith always has works or corresponding actions.

Gal 2:16 " *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*" KJV

God's grace gives us power over sin to produce works that line up with the word of God. We must not neglect our prayer life or we will not have much working for us. It doesn't mean that we have lost out on going to heaven, but we are on hold spiritually and discouragement will have it's hold on us. A good prayer life will cause discouragement to be turned back.

What is it that God wants from us? He wants us to fellowship with him, to learn to hear His

voice, rest in His peace, which is His desire for us. Jesus learned to please the Father, learned to hear his voice and then did the things he was called to do. We must learn to fellowship with the Father.

Psa 27:13 *"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."* KJV

Psa 84:11 *"For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."* KJV

Nathan came to David with a word that was not encouraging, but He had the Father's heart. God would have given him more.

2 Samuel 12:8 *"And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things."* KJV

Our identity should be in the Father, but to many times we have our identity in the past and in circumstances.

The following scriptures are principles in the midst of adversity or discouragement in our lives. We must learn to hold onto these, be doers of the word, knowing that Jesus and the Father love us. Praise in all circumstances, because God has not changed..

Rom 5:1-4 *"Therefore, since we are justified (acquitted, declared righteous, and given a right standing with God) through faith, let us [grasp the fact that we] have [the peace of reconciliation to hold and to enjoy] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One). 2 Through Him also we have [our] access (entrance, introduction) by faith into this grace (state of God's favor) in which we [firmly and safely] stand. And let us rejoice and exult in our hope of experiencing and enjoying the glory of God. 3 Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. 4 And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation."* AMP

Heb 12:2 *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."* KJV

1 Peter 4:12-13 *"Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner."* MESSAGE

Romans chapter 5 tells us the same thing.

1 Peter 4:19 *"So if you find life difficult because you're doing what God said, take it in stride. Trust him. He knows what he's doing, and he'll keep on doing it."* MESSAGE

Phil 4:11-13 *"I'm glad in God, far happier than you would ever guess—happy that you're*

again showing such strong concern for me. Not that you ever quit praying and thinking about me. You just had no chance to show it. Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am. I don't mean that your help didn't mean a lot to me—it did. It was a beautiful thing that you came alongside me in my troubles." MESSAGE

Phil 4:11-13 *"Not that I am implying that I was in any personal want, for I have learned how to be content (satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or disquieted) in whatever state I am. 12 I know how to be abased and live humbly in straitened circumstances, and I know also how to enjoy plenty and live in abundance. I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation, whether well-fed or going hungry, having a sufficiency and enough to spare or going without and being in want. 13 I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency]." AMP*

Do not let discouragement come against you knowing that God has the secret in facing every situation. Jesus is the secret, but bringing it into reality, learning to count it all joy knowing that glory is just around the corner. Discouragement is a weight that will weigh us down. Resist it and if it is a pattern, it must be broken. God will strengthen us if we will seek him.