

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE** Be Encouraged

**SERIES**

**DATE** 7/25/2021

**KEY SCRIPTURE** Hebrews 10:25

**SYNOPSIS**

Discouragement is a weapon of the enemy. Let's overcome him by encouraging each other.

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ Be Encouraged

*There's an old fable that says the Devil once held a sale and offered all the tools of his trade to anyone who would pay their price. They were spread out on the table and each one labeled. Hatred, malice, envy, despair, sickness, sensuality -- all the weapons that everyone knows so well. But off to one side lay a harmless looking wood-shaped instrument marked "discouragement." It was old and worn looking but it was priced far above all the rest. When asked the reason why, the Devil replied, "Because I can use this one so much more easily than the others. No one knows that it belongs to me, so with it I can open doors that are tightly bolted against the others. Once I get inside I can use any tool that suits me best."*

This past year has been a difficult year. There has been a lot of confusion and conflict. Many have been far more isolated than ever before, leading to a feeling of loneliness or abandonment. There has been conflict and cynicism over the direction of our leaders. It has been a rough season. For some, it's like you have been in hiding for a year and are now wondering if it's safe to come out. And, all this is on top of a world that is already challenging and difficult enough to live in. Some may even have a jaded attitude, wondering when the next shoe is going to drop.

*There's a story about a young lawyer who descended into the valley of despondency. Things were going so poorly for him that his friends thought it best to keep all knives and razors away from him for fear of a suicide attempt. In fact, during this time he wrote in his memoirs, "I am now the most miserable man living. Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell. I fear I shall not." The young lawyer who unleashed these desperate feelings of utter hopelessness? His name was Abraham Lincoln. He obviously overcame that season in his life and went on to achieve greatness.*

With Christ, there really is no hopeless situation. VBS taught us this week: **Jesus' power gives us ☞ hope.** We've all dealt with discouragement at one time or another. What we tend to forget, though, is that discouragement is the enemy's weapon.

☞ **Discourage = to deprive of courage or confidence; to hinder; to demoralize; to dishearten.**

☞ **Discouragement is a form of bondage that prevents us from listening to God.**

In Exodus 6 Moses reported to the Israelites what God had said about freeing them from the Egyptians and bringing them out of slavery. God promised mighty acts of judgment and that he would personally be their God. He even promised them a land of their very own would be given to them. Listen to verse 9... Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage.

When life has been harsh and you're down, it's hard to believe the promises of God. Discouragement is one way the enemy keeps us under his thumb. We forget that discouragement is his weapon against us and we stay down. It's a form of bondage.

☞ **Discouragement is a form of deception which can harden our hearts.**

Hebrews 3:12-13



**12** See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. **13** But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

The enemy's nature is to deceive, and one prominent way he deceives us is through discouragement. He wants us to think there is no hope; no way out. Remember, **Jesus' power gives us hope.** When we believe the enemy's lies we can become hardened. Also, note here, that we are to encourage each other so this doesn't happen. So, when we withhold encouragement, we are potentially helping the enemy deceive and harden our brothers and sisters in Christ.

### ☞ **Discouragement is a companion of fear.**

Deuteronomy 1:21

**21** See, the Lord your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the Lord, the God of your fathers, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Fear and discouragement feed each other. One can lead to the other. Both fear and discouragement can lead to a breakdown. In fact, Strong's concordance defines discouragement this way: *to break down, either (literally) by violence, or (figuratively) by confusion and fear*

Dis = do the opposite of; take away

### **Dis courage**

- Dis advantage
- Dis agreement
- Dis connect
- Dis honest
- Dis qualified

This is the nature of the enemy. He takes away; he comes to steal...

### **How to overcome discouragement:**

#### ☞ **Realize that God is always with you**

**Jesus' power gives us hope.** In Deuteronomy 31, when Moses was commissioning Joshua, he reminded him that God would go ahead of him and be with him. He told him to be strong and courageous and he ended with these words: "he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." You are never alone.

#### ☞ **Trust God to fight for you**

In 2 Chronicles 32 Hezekiah said something similar to Moses by encouraging his military officers to be strong and courageous. He reminded them that there is a greater power with us than with the enemy. In verse 8 he said, God is with us to help us and to fight our battles. And the people gained confidence from his words.



When you're afraid and discouraged, it's easy to feel all alone in the dark, and overwhelmed. But God has promised to never leave you and he has promised to fight for you. **Jesus' power gives us hope.**

--Victor Raymond Edman... *Never doubt in the dark what God told you in the light.*

### ☞ **Meditate on the Word; obey it**

In Joshua 1, Joshua encouraged the people to be strong and courageous and he linked it to meditating on the Book of the Law and to obedience, which leads to prosperity and success.

Romans 15:4

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

God's word counteracts discouragement because it gives us hope. As I have been saying the past couple of weeks: He did it before; he will do it again. **Jesus' power gives us hope.**

### ☞ **Work**

1 Chronicles 28:20

David also said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished.

Even modern psychology understands the benefit of work, exercise and productivity. These have a countereffect to discouragement and depression. Now, if you are genuinely, physically exhausted, you need rest, but for discouragement, you need work. Be productive.

### ☞ **Persevere**

In 2 Chronicles 20, when faced with a vast army, Jahaziel reminded King Jehoshaphat and the Israelites that the battle was not theirs, but God's. He encouraged them to take their positions, face the enemy, and stand firm.

What's your position? Do you believe God's promises? Do you trust him to bring you through? Choose your position and then stand firm and persevere.

*Harold Sherman wrote a book entitled How To Turn Failure Into Success. In it he gives a "Code of Persistence." If you give up too easily, write this down and read it daily.*

- 1. I will never give up so long as I know I am right.*
- 2. I will believe that all things will work out for me if I hang on until the end.*
- 3. I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.*
- 4. I will not permit anyone to intimidate me or deter me from my goals.*
- 5. I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.*
- 6. I will try again and again and yet again to accomplish what I desire.*
- 7. I will take new faith and resolution from the knowledge that all successful men and women had to fight defeat and adversity.*





8. *I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what seeming obstacles may confront me.*

**Jesus' power gives us hope,** so persevere.

### ☞ **What we need is encouragement: to add courage...**

*--James S. Hewett ...Mary was having a tough day and had stretched herself out on the couch to do a bit of what she thought to be well-deserved complaining and self-pitying. She moaned to her mom and brother, "Nobody loves me -- the whole world hates me!" Her brother, busily occupied playing a game, hardly looked up at her and passed on this encouraging word: "That's not true, Mary. Some people don't even know you." What a lift!*

Don't forget that God is fighting for you, Jesus is interceding for you, and the Holy Spirit is encouraging you. We also know how the story ends. One day very soon we who believe will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and we will be with the Lord forever. Those are encouraging words, and according to 1 Thessalonians 4, we are to remind each other of that truth.

### ☞ **Encourage each other**

Romans 1:11-12

**11** I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— **12** that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

*More people fail for lack of encouragement than for any other reason.*

### ☞ **Hebrews 10:25**

**Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**

*Don Berry-Graham ...In August 1995, the church I pastored made the decision to do a major renovation on our thirty-five-year-old sanctuary. The first step was to put together a crew of people to do internal demolition. Around forty people showed up to take care of this task. Dust was everywhere as we ripped up carpet, knocked out walls, tore down ceilings, and dismantled the platform. There were people of all shapes, sizes, and ages. It was a wonderful project for individuals like me because absolutely no skill was needed. It doesn't take much training to destroy something.*

*When this phase was completed, the remodeling began. This was the part that required skilled and trained people—those who knew how to construct, build, and refurbish. Their task was much more difficult and it took much longer than the demolition.*

*Anybody can tear down, but not everyone can build up. It doesn't take a genius to destroy something, but it does take some know-how to construct something of value. The unskilled can quickly take apart that which takes the skilled a lot of time to put together. Do you build or demolish?*



We should all be encouragers and we can remind each other that **Jesus' power gives us hope.**

*Bruce Larson, in his book, Wind and Fire, points out some interesting facts about sandhill cranes: "These large birds, who fly great distances across continents, have three remarkable qualities. First, they rotate leadership. No one bird stays out in front all the time. Second, they choose leaders who can handle turbulence. And then, all during the time one bird is leading, the rest are honking their affirmation. That's not a bad model for the church. Certainly, we need leaders who can handle turbulence and who are aware that leadership ought to be shared. But most of all, we need a church where we are all honking encouragement." What are you honking?*

Don't be discouraged. Trust God. Stand firm. God is with you. God is for you. **Jesus' power gives us hope.** Remember who you are: God's choice people. Be encouraged!

Now, encourage each other before you go.