

Acts of Jesus, Lesson 38: Discouragement

1. Today I am going to speak to you on the subject of discouragement

- Discouragement is no respecter of persons
 - Individuals of the highest caliber in the Scriptures were plagued with it at times:
 - Moses : **Numbers 11:15.**
 - Joshua: **Joshua 7:7**
 - Elijah: **I Kings 19:4**
 - Paul: **Acts 18**
 - Paul no doubt had some very discouraging times we can only imagine since the Scriptures don't enlighten us, but his circumstances paint a good enough picture to educate our imaginations.
 - But here in Acts 18 we get a glimpse into his emotional state at a difficult time and see that this great man was just like us.
 - We're not guessing here, because in two places in Scripture we are given clear indication as to emotional state during this time:
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- **I Cor. 2:3** – Not quite the picture you had of Paul is it?
 - **Acts 18:9-10** – The word discouragement doesn't show up here, but we have the clear indicators of its presence, not the least of which is his need for encouragement from the Lord.
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2. Let's turn to Nehemiah 4

- Here we'll find not only the causes but also the cures for discouragement. **Nehemiah 4**
 - Causes of Discouragement:
 1. **Ridicule -- 4:1-3**
 - Maybe the toughest thing to endure (Paul had it from the Jews)
 - Being ridiculed for your faith can easily equal growing discouraged in your faith.
 - Most will stand bravely when shot at but will cower meekly when laughed at.
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2. **Threats – VV. 7-8**

- Paul had threats from the Jews.
 - Is someone threatening you? Maybe it's just the threat of failure?
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3. **Fatigue – V.10a**

- Watch yourself when you get tired (also sick or in pain) discouragement is never far away.
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4. **Frustration** – **V.10b** “There is much rubble; and we ourselves are unable to rebuild the wall.”

- Is a project frustrating you? Fix one thing and there seems to be just as much left to fix.
 - Maybe it’s the rubble in your life: Old habits, pet sins, frustrating character traits.
 - Don’t let frustration get you discouraged.
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5. **Fear** – **V. 14**

- Fear is paralyzing.
 - Paul knew fear and it threatened to discourage him from his mission.
 - Fear can be dominating.
 - It keeps people from doing what they want and what they should.
 - **When fear comes, discouragement is not far behind.**
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3. **How do we fight discouragement?**

1. **Return to your knees** – **V. 9**

- Go back to place where God spoke to you
 - Rely on Him.
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2. **Reorganize** – **V. 13**

- Nehemiah’s first plans were enough to get half the wall built, but they weren’t enough to get it all built.
 - When you hit a snag, reorganize.
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3. **Remember** – **V. 14**

- The Lord is sufficient to accomplish absolutely anything through Us... remember that?!
 - Remind yourself of who the Lord is and His attributes.
 - Read the great stories of the men and women who believed God could do the impossible.
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4. **Resist** – **V. 14b**

- Discouragement is nothing more than allowing circumstances whether real or imagined, to make your decisions for you.
 - “Submit yourself to the Lord, Resist the devil and he will flee from you” – Return to your knees and then get back to what you were supposed to be doing - keep pushing, fighting, moving.
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